Film Quarterly

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William F. Van Wert

Psychoanalysis and *House of Games*

House of Games (story, screenplay, and direction by David Mamet) is a remarkable film—remarkable for the risks it takes; remarkable for its good reception from critics and audiences alike; remarkable, because its good reception is based by and large on a misreading of the film; remarkable, finally, for the insightful way it promotes psychoanalysis as a potent force for transformation (along the lines of a Lacanian replication of symptoms in lieu of a "cure"), even as it pretends to pay homage to all previous Hollywood debunkings of psychoanalysis by pitting the female therapist against all the male con men, by portraying psychotherapy as an alternative and competing con game, and by apparently proclaiming the male con men to be the victors in the struggle.

The last three scenes of *House of Games* are the transformational scenes and the site of all misreadings, and I have a great urge to go right to them, but my findings wouldn't make sense without some preliminary field work. Nonetheless, let me say this much here: There is a scene in the film in which Dr. Margaret Ford (Lindsay Crouse) looks at, and listens to, Maria, the older woman/therapist who is her mentor and friend, lecturing to a class on inversion, projection, compression, and elaboration as the four Freudian mechanisms for transforming psychic material. In my reading of the film, the first three-quarters of *House of Games* is concerned with inversion and projection, while only the last ten minutes, the last three scenes of the film, take up compression and elaboration. But this coda of *House of Games* is like a scorpion's tail, a tail that comes right over the top and fatally bites all that comes before. The film, itself, is its own best con, more elaborate and more "tell-

Con Games

ing'' than any of the con games contained within.

And to appreciate just how elaborate the film as con game played upon the spectator really is, the spectator must be willing to read the film in retrospect, to go backwards into the film with questions, to undergo multiple viewings. The reason for this has to do with the way voyeurism is used with and against the narrative, how disavowal and avowal moments are manipulated, and how shock/surprise prevents the spectator from seeing *as* understanding.

Mamet's film is completely circular, ritualistically so, full of shots or events which mirror other shots or events, which is to say that later shots and events seem to replicate earlier ones, but they do so mirror-fashion, that is, reversed. The film begins with a woman asking Dr. Margaret Ford to autograph a copy of the best-selling *Driven,* presumably a study of compulsive personality, and ends with a man asking her to autograph his copy. It begins with Dr. Ford admiring her mentor's lighter and ends with her stealing another woman's lighter.

Within that ritualistic circularity moves the therapist herself. And who is Dr. Margaret Ford? She is a working psychoanalyst with two patients in the film: a murderess named Darlene and a male patient, Billy Hahn, who pretends to have gambling debts he can't repay and who turns out to be a ''plant,'' a con-federate of the con men. She is also the author of the best-selling *Driven,* a book that has brought her into the social order, and made her an object for the attention of both autograph-seekers and con men. She is completely devoted to her work—a workaholic, in fact—who has sterile home surroundings, no love interest, no sexual outlet, no children, pets, hobbies, or any other interest outside the clinic than writing. She has her friend and mentor Maria, also apparently single and without ''attachments,'' and she has her patients, and she goes back and forth between Maria and her patients until the world of the con men is opened to her.

She is not to be confused with Ingrid Bergman's psychoanalyst in *Spellbound,* for whom a simple removal of glasses causes a transformation from professional to sexualized woman who can fall in love with her amnesiac patient. Margaret Ford is neither beautiful nor ugly, but instead plain, even asexual. She wears her hair pulled back, uses little or no make-up, speaks in a gruff manner and chain-smokes unfiltered Camel cigarettes. And she is obsessive about writing: writing books, writing down what her patients say, writing down her suspicions about the con man Mike (Joe Mantegna) on a napkin at Charley's Bar.

Her book is entitled *Driven,* the drive turned around on itself, the noun or verb-as-process reversed into a gerundive or participial form, which is a perfect title for a study of compulsive personality, but which also obscures the mark of sexual difference (remindful of the way Derrida turns two Latin verbs into *différance* and then into its gerundive or participial forms—*différents* and *différends;* also remindful of the way Lacan closed his school in 1980 with a pun, by turning ''je persévère'' (the verb meaning ''to persist'' or ''to continue'') into a noun-form, ''Je père-sévère''—''the stern father''). The point here goes beyond such connotations. *House of Games* is about the transformation of the dyadic relationship between analyst and analysand in the realm of the imaginary to inscription in the symbolic, the social order, in and by language, and Dr. Margaret Ford is both the skilled practitioner and prisoner of language. Language, itself, becomes a primary locus of compulsion, duplicity, lack of communication. Characters speak precisely, but *at* each other, not *to* each other. Direct questions are always deflected and go unanswered. Conversations have the characteristics of two distinct monologues instead of those of dialogue. Margaret and Mike both speak with an edge; they punch and spar with words, and where Mike ''convinces'' her of anything, it has less to do with his using logic or tenderness or any other aid to persuasion than with her susceptibility to suggestion—

from Mike, from Maria, from her two patients.

Scenes take the form of vignettes, clipped and shortened from normal length, until her session with Billy Hahn, the male patient, so that access into the film is skewed, made epigrammatic. A young woman approaches her for an autograph and says it's for a friend, but then confesses: "You've helped me very much." Cut to Margaret's session with Darlene, but only the end of the session, where, against a white curtain, Darlene accuses her: "Do you think that you're exempt from experience?" Cut to Margaret analyzing the session with Maria. Margaret has discovered an inversion in Darlene's dreams: the animal "lirg" being in reality "girl." "She is trying to do good," Margaret concludes, adept at catching the patient's inversion, but blind to her own projections (she says "pressures" instead of "pleasures" in "Sometimes I think the only pressures in life. . . ." and later, "All her life *my* father tells her she's a whore" instead of "her father"). Maria catches these slips, perceives them as a sign of stress, and tells Margaret to enjoy life, to do what gives her joy. More, they are a "tell," a clue to how much Margaret has projected, has reversed the usual transference of patient upon therapist with her own transference onto the patient. The scene with Maria is significant also for Margaret's noticing Maria's lighter: "It's old and it's heavy and it looks like someone gave it to you." Her statement is the first hint of the kleptomaniac that she will become by film's end.

Billy Hahn has less of a story to tell than Darlene (Darlene has already been sentenced and imprisoned), but more of an accusation. He pulls out a gun and accuses Margaret (the accusation acting as a suggestion): "You do nothing. It's talk, just talk. The whole thing is a con game." Margaret's answer takes the form of an exchange: "You give me the gun, and I will help you." Once again, this is projection, even more literalized. She agrees to stand in for Billy at the House of Games.

The rest of the film, until the last three scenes, involves her interactions with Mike and the other con men at the House of Games, a gradual process of seduction (suggestion) in which the men play partially to her intelligence by exposing one con after another, each one bigger than the preceding one, thereby gaining her trust, until they convince her that she is part of the con.

There are several points of interest to these con games. One is that they isolate Margaret with a sexual male other, Mike, who performs two brief guessing cons, which involve hand-holding and eye contact, the first to get her into the poker game, the second to ask her to sleep with him, and both to physicalize the seduction. They share with her the names of the various cons, even when they have not shared their real names with each other: the tell, the flew, short con, master con. And the cons involve role-playing which makes Margaret into Mike's girlfriend in the poker game, his wife at the bus station, again his wife in the hotel room.

The language used is crucial. From the moment she steps into the House of Games, Margaret enters an all-male world in which everyone talks: poker talk, insider speech, language which excludes her, eludes her, language as male encoding. The language is both unnatural (and, therefore, "exotic" to both Margaret and the spectator of either sex) and unreal, having more to do with nursery-rhyme ditties than with any male speech to which we are accustomed. A sampling of some of those ditties:

"A man with style is a man who can smile."

"You wanna win the hand, you stay in till the end."

"Everybody stays, everybody plays."

"The man can't play, stay away."

"It happens to the best, it happens to the rest."

"Aces and jacks, man with the axe."

Margaret presumably could have recourse to her own arsenal of speech, psychoanalytic terms which would exclude the men, but she has withheld both her name and profession (it turns out they already knew both from the start), and curiously her own language goes flat, deadened by theirs, so that finally what comes out of her mouth are cliches ("A sucker born every minute, huh?" "You learn something new every day." "You can't cheat an honest man.") or language so loaded (with alliteration, for example) that it's unbelievable ("You bloody better well believe it."). In all of these cons, the con men depersonify her in the most sexist terms, calling her "the bitch," "the broad," "the mark." And, when she sees through the "tell" con of the card game (the leaking squirt gun), the con men don't apologize. Their response is the trite response from the *Godfather* films: "It was only

business—the American Way." In any of these cons (in which she is always secretly the mark), she is at the best a player and at the least a prop.

It is Mike who articulates the seduction for us, an articulation which Margaret never confirms nor denies, but merely goes along with. The root of seduction in any con game, of course, is trust (hence, the name—confidence game). Mike says: "Because you give me your confidence? No, because I give you mine." He rationalizes for her their impending sex: "You want somebody to come along, somebody to possess you, to take you into a new thing." And after sex he gives her permission to be a kleptomaniac, to boost his penknife: "Good blood, and bad blood, somehow all those parts have got to speak, you know what I'm talking about? The burden of responsibility has become too great. . . . Take a memento, take something from life."

What is less obvious, but ultimately more important for our purposes here, is how much the con men depend upon Margaret's voyeurism for the success of the various cons. Even as she speaks with Mike outside in the bar of the House of Games and says, "I need a match" (all puns applicable), the door to the poker game is left ajar, just enough so that Margaret and the camera can fix on Georgie, the supposed "mark" with his pinky ring. And the master con will not play at all unless Margaret's voyeurism comes into play, seeing through the partly opened door to the bathroom and the mark pretending to be a cop.

The master con works (they get $80,000 of her money) and precisely because all three men impinge upon her (Mike holds her and hurries her, giving her his "confidence"; Joe calls her "bitch" and "broad" and slaps her to steal a car; the fake cop stages his "death" as a physical assault on her body in a cramped doorway). They are right in that the fake murder implicates her, for which her money serves as guilt money or atonement, but they fail to see why the implication is so strong for Margaret (the "hook" is with Darlene, her female patient, the murderess made into a whore by her father and who has slain the father). But neither implication works without the two incidences of voyeurism—in which the camera seems to be co-conspirator, eliding with her point of view and seeming to exclude the con men, who, it turns out, deliberately preconceived these incidences of voyeurism as strategies to be deployed.

House of Games: Joe Mantegna and Lindsay Crouse

Jacqueline Rose, in a very interesting reading of the film *Coma,* discusses the look of woman as an excess which threatens the narrative, a look the narrative cannot handle and must somehow forget.

> The central woman character tries to uncover why her woman friend, and then others before her, have gone into coma and then disappear in the hospital where she works. But what this releases is a kind of paranoia across the whole space of her investigation as she starts to believe that everyone is against her. As if there was an excess of danger in the very idea of woman as detective (the idea that she might actually LOOK) which produces its paranoid reversal although there is in fact only one villain in the film. The film then has to forget this spiral of paranoia which goes way beyond anything that the narrative can finally resolve. The film tidies up the narrative (the classical Hollywood ending where the heroine is saved by her man) but the anxiety which it has unleashed around the woman remains in excess.[1]

Rose's insight seems extremely accurate for most classical Hollywood films, but in fact exactly the opposite takes place in *House of Games,* in which Margaret is required to look, the narrative (and con games) depend upon her voyeurism for their deepening, and there is no narrative/con

without her gaze. The paranoia of which Rose speaks must then be internalized by Margaret, within Margaret, who embodies both the look and the consequences of the look, leaving precisely for excess—her kleptomania. As memento of exchange, she has given $80,000 and gotten a penknife. And the penknife (sheathed phallus), like Georgie's leaking squirt gun, is emblematic of all the weaponry in *House of Games:* they go limp or stay sheathed or shoot blanks or in some other way, both literally and psychoanalytically, don't work.

The master con might have worked, of course, if the men hadn't sent Billy to check on Margaret. Satisfied that she is still shaken enough to keep silent, Billy goes away, but Margaret sees him go away in the red car she stole. Mamet conveys her gradual awareness in cinematic red, providing the bridge between her clinic and Charley's Bar: fake red blood stains on her blouse to real blood from a cut in her hand to the red car to her red coat and cape and hair, tinted that way by the neon sign. Reversal of Ollie Ollie Oxen Free and the various male ditties of before, it's as though Red Riding Hood has come to spy on the wolves.

She walks through a door marked "Delivery" and toward a sign marked "Carta Blanca." In a psychoanalytic sense she moves from birth and *tabula rasa* to where she stands behind wooden bars, which separate the main bar from the telephones and bathrooms,her point of witness in the inscription in the social order, already predetermined, that Lacan termed the law of the name of the father. There are no disinterested customers in the bar; there are only con men, all of whom have participated in the master con, of which, she now understands fully, she was the mark. There is even an eerie sense of her invisibility in this scene, for the black man who played Mr. Dean in the hotel is right next to her on the telephone and doesn't even notice her as he moves back into the main bar.

When she positions herself behind the wooden bars, we have a representation of Foucault's terms of a dialectic of power relations (men bonded together) and confinement (women isolated). The camera respects those terms. It either stays behind Margaret, showing her looking at the men, or merges with the gaze of Margaret (in which case camera, spectator, and character all share the same gaze), but it does not eliminate the bars. The view

House of Games: the ritual lighter

of the men splitting up the take, her money, is always partially obscured or framed by the wooden bars. Her positioning in this scene is an "answer" shot, a mirror shot (with appropriate reversal) of that shot of Margaret framed behind bars outside Darlene's cell, the medium close-up of her face, waiting to be released.

Within the bar the men are all there: Mike, who slept with her; Joe, who slapped her; the fake cop who isn't dead after all; two men who played cops outside the hotel; Georgie and the black man who played Mr. Dean. Billy Hahn, who is missing, is alluded to. There are no reaction shots of Margaret in this scene, so we have no register of her emotions, and we take all disclosures personally, not having Margaret's face as register, intermediary, or buffer.

There is no human kindness in their conversation, no pity for the mark. The fake cop complains: "How come I always gotta play the straight guy?" Joe complains that he threw his arm out "battin' that bitch around." Mike answers: "You pay for it—that's realism." In their world, acting is the order of the day, appearances and surface are everything, so that "realism" is something extra. Sex as well is something figured into the budget, an added touch or realism to be paid for. "A small price to pay," Mike says when reminded of the sex. The biggest joke at her expense is her kleptomania: "The broad's an addict," "She boosts my lucky pocket knife," "The bitch is a booster, a real deaf, man." Mike says he is leaving for Las Vegas that

night, and the conversation ends with comments referring to Mike's chameleon capabilities, but which are also studded with alliteration: Joe: "Mike, you are the ring-tail rounder. A real King Kong." Mike: "One riot, one ranger."

The one good piece of news for Margaret in this scene is that no one died in the hotel. She is not implicated, as Darlene is, as a murderess. Otherwise, she has been thoroughly used and abused. Not only are there no males in the film who are "straight" or real or unimplicated, but, worse, their entire masquerade and livelihood have depended upon her: woman as "driven," as compulsion, as seduced. It would also be possible to read *House of Games* using Bataille's notion of expenditure, a skewed economy of exchange, in which Margaret is punished for attaining the success, independence, notoriety, and wealth ordinarily aspired to by men by being duped by a whole world of men, whose sole source of income is her money. In such an exchange economy, she has gotten adventure, access to a world normally closed to women, sex and role-playing, a sense of the ludic missing from her work. They have gotten her money.

Questions. We cannot help but wonder how far into the presumed backstory we have to go to get the "tells" of this elaborate master con. Did Billy come to Mike, suggesting Margaret as a mark, or was Billy sent to her as a patient to stir things up with the gun? Was the master con plotted out from the beginning or did they modify it as they went along? Was sex with Margaret part of the plotted con or an extra? How could they be sure they could count on her voyeurism? Had they tried this before with other professional women or was Margaret the first, the "con to end all cons," as Mike puts it? Nor can we help but muster all our spectator sympathies for Margaret, whose trust, body, and bank account have all been abused, so that we expect the revenge of the next scene, want the catharsis of such revenge, and do not question its realism. Thus, we are "set up" for the film's most elaborate con.

In my reading of the film, the next scene at the airport (the most problematic scene of the entire film) does not happen, if by "happen" we mean that she actually kills Mike. There is no physical space or terrain for it to happen within this narrative, except in Margaret's psyche. If the rest of the film has exposed all her weaknesses, this scene shows her strength. Her resources as a therapist are what separate her from Darlene, her murderess patient. Margaret can effect her purge, her murder of Mike, without externalizing—without subjecting herself to legal consequences. And this is her triumph (the opposite of debunkings of psychiatry in Hitchcock and classical Hollywood narratives): that she can manage to be both analyst and analysand, break the dyadic relationship therein, and effect a countertransference that frees her to enter into the new system of economic exchange of the film's last scene.

How is this possible and why don't we see it? To answer the first part of the question, we must look at all the little "tells" of the airport scene. Margaret looks at listings for VegasAir on a computer, but the backdrop is Alaska Air Lines, and there are no other people in the airport: no employees, no travelers. Margaret, for the first time, is dressed to *look feminine* (Lacan's notion of masquerade): she is wearing make-up, she is even wearing high heels.

Mike comes and she descends on him, full of breathless responses: "They're following me" (how could they be when there was no crime?), "I got a quarter of a million dollars here" (seducing him with more money), "I bought my ticket in another name . . . My real name is Margaret" (ticket to where?). In this next-to-last scene of the film, it is important to her in her purge that she emerge, reveal herself, come clean with her real name. What ensues is "unreal" dialogue, made up for the occasion, in which each interrupts the other:

She: It was fate I found you.

He: Yes, it was.

She: Because together . . .

He: Yes, we can.

They go behind the counters down a passageway and through a door that would realistically be locked to the room where all checked baggage goes for loading. There Margaret begins using language borrowed from sessions with Darlene: "I knew that I was being punished. I knew that I was bad . . . because I took your knife."

She has even laid in the "tell" of her own deception, to give Mike, the sexualized other, a voice, the presumption of otherness, of resistance. "You crapped out of turn," he says, "you crumbed the

play.'' Giving him this awareness of a ploy is important to her purge, for otherwise this psychic drama would merely be a reenactment of pure identification and she would be a con man too (the game is already gendered—con *man;* ''con woman'' and ''con person'' don't work).

It's also important for her therapeutic purge that she allow herself anger, irrationality, even some sense of being out of control. ''You took my money, you raped me, you took me under false pretenses,'' she says. The first and third acusations are accurate; the second is not. But this is her purge and she gets to say whatever helps.

He continues to resist and she begins to shoot him. The first bullet is the ''tell'' that this is all happening on her psychic stage. They're very close to each other, her gun is pointed up, and yet he's wounded in the leg. Once he's wounded, he begins a return tirade, the words of which clearly come more from Margaret and her sessions with Darlene than from any relationship Mike and Margaret have had.

> You thief. You always need to get caught, cuz you know you're bad. I never hurt anybody. I never shot anybody. You sought this out. This is what you always wanted. I knew it the first time you came in. You're worthless, you know it? You're a whore. You came back like a dog to its own father. You sick bitch. I'm not gonna give you shit . . . Thank you, sir. May I have another?

We could underline the words for emphasis: thief (her real crime—kleptomania); worthless and whore (her sessions with Darlene); ''You came back like a dog to its own father'' (nonsensical, since dogs have little or no relationship at all with their fathers; but with a final inversion, ''dog'' to ''god,'' the statement accrues psychoanalytical import). And the final statement (''Thank you, sir. May I have another?'') makes no sense at all within the context of this situation, which is to say that it is ludicrous: that is, ludic, not realistic.

He finishes these words, she finishes firing her clip, and his body falls onto the conveyor belt for baggage. All sounds of airplanes stop. Nobody comes. The camera pulls up to ceiling-level, an open ceiling, which exposes all walls as artifice, as a ''set,'' and Margaret leaves, high angle-down (from what has been sometimes referred to as ''God's point of view''), leaving the bag of money on the floor.

Why don't we see the unreality of this scene? The reasons are both psychological and technical. From a psychological standpoint, we expect this sort of revenge, even need it, our sympathies having been melded with Margaret's in the previous scene at the bar by the convergence of three gazes into one (character, camera, and spectator all sharing the same look). But this is also a disavowal moment for the spectator, a shock-surprise moment in the Sartrian sense of voyeurism, for *we* are not murderers, we are not out of control, and we cannot thus maintain an identification with Margaret. Our confusion is further enhanced by Mamet. Why don't we hear Mike's words as he says them? I had to replay the scene on videotape some seven or eight times before getting his words down on paper. The reason is because we are blocked from understanding, both visually and acoustically. Visually, we see progressively larger close-ups of Margaret's face as she approaches Mike. On the sound track we hear both the shots fired and the echoes as well as planes taking off and landing, even though there are no planes. The visuals take us away from Mike and fix our gaze on Margaret's face. The sound track obscures what Mike is saying. And for the viewer who believes there is a dead body of Mike anywhere other than in Margaret's mind, Mamet has succeeded in *his* master con, fake dead body and all, with the spectator as mark.

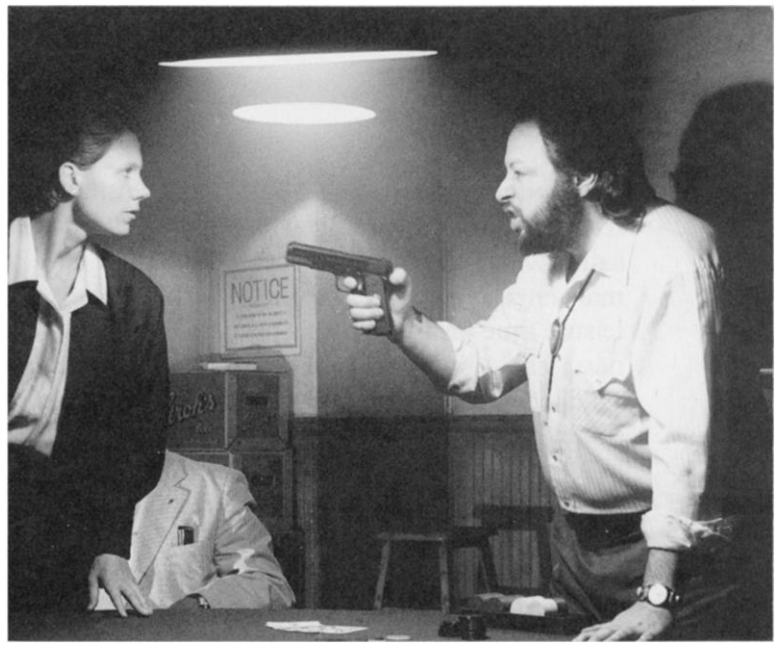
The last scene of the film makes no sense for such a spectator, who is ready to believe that the male voice asking, ''Are you Dr. Margaret Ford?'' has to be a male voice of authority, the police about to arrest her, and not an autograph seeker. For the duped spectator, there are questions that cannot be answered. Why is she dressed in a Hawaiian print blouse? What happened to Mike's body, to the inevitable investigation by police? Is she under surveillance or suspicion? Why is she so calm? How could she be tanned and have taken a trip, if she left all her money at the airport?

This scene provides a sort of negative justification for the previous scene: it thwarts whose who read the airport scene as realism. But there is a more positive and more significant justification for this epilogue, because, as exhilarating as the airport scene is as a demonstration of the potent transforming possibilities of psychoanalysis, it means

nothing until the subject has been shown reinscribed in the social order again. This, then, is the function of the final scene, which gives us Dr. Margaret Ford, transformed: dressed in a flower print blouse, wearing make-up and sunglasses, tanned, relaxed, having lunch with her friend Maria (they had cut short a lunch and postponed a dinner earlier in the film). Margaret has just returned from a trip, and she confides to Maria: "When you've done something unforgivable you must forgive yourself. And that's what I've done and it's done." And, while many spectators think she refers to the literal murder of Mike, my interpretation goes far beyond that. She has used her powers as psychiatrist to treat herself as patient; she has forgiven her father, no doubt, but much more beyond: her compulsion, her susceptibility to suggestion, her guilt, and even the one ongoing impulse disorder in her renovated personality—her kleptomania.

When Maria is called away to a phone, Margaret steals the lighter of a woman sitting at the next table. She holds it, lights her cigarette, and smiles, the camera moving in for a close-up. End of film. The kleptomania is significant for two reasons. On one level it signals a shift in the exchange economy. Where before Margaret was dependent upon men to generate the thrill and excitement missing in her life, now she can generate her own pleasures and quite comfortably in the company of other women. She has her work, her status, her friend Maria (no longer needed as a mentor) and this fancy restaurant filled with other affluent women eating by themselves or with other women. In my reading of the film, the theft of the lighter is an intimacy, outrageous as that may seem, between two women.

In a film where artifice and duplicity have counted for so much, this epilogue is extremely satisfying, especially when compared with films about male voyeurs, whose endings involve a tricky transcendence and an escape from the social order: in *Being There,* for example, Chauncey Gardener is on his way to becoming president of the United States and walking on water by film's end; and in *Man of Flowers* Charles begins with the voyeurism of nude female bodies in Titian and ends by inscribing himself in a Magritte painting replication, in which he becomes one of several anonymous men on a hillside. Mamet's *House of Games* offers both a blockade, the film as a master con played



House of Games

upon the spectator, but also a way out, a reinscription in the social order, without transcendence or sainthood or martyrdom for the main character, since her impulse disorder is quite intact and potentially still susceptible to the prohibitions and punishments of law.

I think it is significant that she chooses a cigarette lighter as her talisman/fetish, beyond the fact that it is quite practical for one of her compulsions (chain-smoking) and that it echoes both her appreciation of Maria's heavy old lighter and her asking Mike for a match. For the lighter is a sexual symbol like the pocketknife. Just as her theft of the pocketknife was an act of appropriating the sheathed phallus, thereby giving herself "the primary fantasy of universal anatomic equality . . . at the core of the individual's attempt at a bisexual identification,"[2] so too the theft of a cigarette lighter is an act of appropriating a bisexual identification at the level of the impulse disorders, because the act (kleptomania, which is always feminine) sheathes or encompasses the object taken—fire (arson, which is always masculine).[3]

Margaret Ford is neither the first nor the most famous portrayal of a kleptomaniac on film. That dubious distinction would probably have to go to Hitchcock's *Marnie,* and the contrasts between these two kleptomaniacs are quite significant. For Marnie, kleptomania is merely one of a series of distress signals of a deeply disturbed personality (polymorphous-perverse sexual relations, childish irrationality, lying, whining, blackouts, nightmares are the others). For Marnie the "cure" consists of a remembering by her mother, forced by Sean Con-

nery/Mark and witnessed by Marnie, of a sexual trauma, in which the child Marnie killed a drunken sailor who was "hurting" her Mama. The cure is male-engineered, and in a sense Mark's money and leisure time (as much as his persistence and cleverness) can "buy" this cure. In another sense all Hitchcock films that deal with phobias or psychic disabilities are about amnesia, since the cure resides in a remembering, a retelling or a revisualization, after which (the films usually end here and thus endlessly defer any final reassurance) supposedly healthy relations can occur. *Spellbound, Marnie,* and *Vertigo* all assume this narrative strategy. But Marnie simply substitutes one parent figure for another (her mother for Mark) in her cure. By contrast, while one may question the effectiveness of Margaret Ford as an analyst, based on the few sessions we witness, her treatment of herself is much more realistic in a Lacanian sense than that to be found in Hitchcock and other classic Hollywood narratives. She is not "cured" of her impulse disorder, but she has learned how to "play past it" (Mike's words to her); she has learned how to use it, as the last scene shows us, not as a sexual deficiency, which would guarantee further dependency upon a sexualized male other, but as a form of oblativity, or gift, to herself.

Notes

1. Jacqueline Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (London and New York: Verso, 1986), p. 221.
2. Bernard Cowitz, "The Sexual Deviations," in *Pyshoanalytic Psychiatry for Lawyers,* ed. Daniel B. Gesensway (Philadelphia: The American Law Institute, 1982), pp. 185–210.
3. Cowitz, p. 205.

Scott MacDonald

Ernie Gehr

Camera Obscura/ Lens/Filmstrip

Ernie Gehr's films are voyages into the conditions of the films' production; and they discover some of the untapped visual and conceptual potential of these conditions. The films critique the narrowness of the parameters of conventional film, by developing inventive experiences from and about technology and the procedures that conventional films normally attempt to eliminate from veiwers' consciousness. The three films emphasized in this overview of Gehr's work—*Morning* (1968), *Serene Velocity* (1970), *Eureka* (1974–1979)—explore the three basic elements of moving picture camera and projector technology: the camera obscura, the lens, and the filmstrip.

Gehr has always been unusually reticent about his life, and as a result we don't know a good deal about how he came to make the earliest of his films currently in distribution. What is clear is that by the time he made *Morning* (1968), he was already a sophisticated film-maker, capable of using the film experience as a means of thinking about specific elements of the mechanical/chemical apparatus of cinema. *Morning* is a 4½ minute visual interpretation of a portion of an apartment (I assume it's Gehr's) at dawn: we see the end of a bed, the legs of someone presumably still sleeping, and a cat—but the personal elements are basically a context for the film's focus on light. The camera points toward a window which opens onto an alley; by working with the single-framing function of the camera and the aperture, Gehr takes control of the light this window lets into the space: we can see—or seem to see—its actual substance.

Of course, the moment we consider what is actually occurring as the light seems to flood the space one moment and to reveal it in an ordinary way a fraction of a second later, we realize that the

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Ernie Gehr's *Serene Velocity*

actual "room" into which the light flows is not the apartment, but the camera box. Gehr reminds us that the movie camera is, essentially, a "room" into which light is admitted through the "window" of the aperture. This is more than metaphor; it is a witty encapsulation of the history of a crucial element of the cinematic apparatus. In a very real sense, still and motion picture cameras developed as miniaturizations of the cubical rooms Western people have traditionally built as living spaces. In fact, the original camera obscuras *were* rooms, but rooms in which the influx of light was far more precisely controlled than the light through the windows of normal rooms. As we experience *Morning,* we see a conventional room space *and* the technological intensification of it which ultimately made still and motion pictures possible.

A second dimension of Gehr's evocation of the evolution of cinema becomes evident if one notices that the powerful flickering of the light flooding through the apartment window is reminiscent of the experience of looking directly into a movie projector while it's running. In a general sense, the rooms we live in are theater-like, as well as camera-like. Each morning, the light of the sun projects into our living space, revealing our physical surround. The movie projector is merely one important development among many in the long history of the technological domestication of lighting. As we sit in a theater watching *Morning,* we are face to face with the two historical processes—the development of the camera and of the projector—which came together at the dawn of the history of cinema in the Cinématographe.

In the years since *Morning,* Gehr has completed a series of distinguished films, each of which can be seen as attempting to provide a new kind of film experience. *Wait* (1968) extends the procedures used in *Morning.* By working one frame at a time, with the aperture, and with the zoom lens and tiny camera movements, Gehr transforms a quiet family scene into a highly energized visual music which hovers dramatically between the camera's ability to record the visual scene exposed to it (Lumière) and to magically transform reality (Méliès). In *Reverberation* (1969) the subjects are texture and speed. Instead of ignoring the potential of the textural qualities of film grain, Gehr dramatically extends them so that the various scenes of a couple (Andrew Noren and Margaret Lamarre) on New York streets are revealed in slow motion as gradually changing, particle-ized fields of black, white, and grey. The imagery is seen from within a fittingly reverberant sound environment. For *Transparency* (1969) Gehr set up his camera to peer across a highway. In the foreground cars regularly flash through the image, while in the distance we can see, from time to time, the flight of birds and planes. Because the cars move past the camera so quickly, they leave only the most rudimentary imprints on the film: in fact, if one holds the strip of film to the light one sees only abstract strokes of transparent color. Like *Wait, Transparency* develops a visual dynamic between foreground and background, left and right—and between the abstraction of the cars and the "realistic" recording of the distant, slowly moving birds and planes.

In 1970 Gehr finished his two most reductive films—*History* and *Field*—and *Serene Velocity,* which remains his best known work and, with Snow's *Wavelength,* the most widely mentioned "structural" film. In *History* the textural concern of *Reverberation* is carried a full step further: all identifiable recorded imagery is eliminated. The viewer is confronted—for 40 minutes!—by an energetic shifting field of swirling film grain, within which one tries to see information of some decipherable sort. The title of the film suggests both the basic strata of the film emulsion in which all cinematic information is embedded, and, in a more general sense, the raw material of human and natural phenomena, onto which history is projected. For the overwhelming majority of viewers *History*

Ernie Gehr's *History*

would be, I'm sure, a most infuriating experience, the perfect cinematic Emperor's New Clothes. But for those enamored with the potential of film, with simply being in a screening space, *History* can function as a cinematic mandala. *Field* creates a textured diagonal field of motion, the precise nature and source of which remains ambiguous throughout the film. At first, the motion through the frame seems to go from the upper left corner to the lower right corner, or in the opposite direction, but it is finally perceived as—impossibly—going in both directions simultaneously. We are presented with a cinematic phenomenon which we can perceive and explore, but which we cannot decipher according to any conventional motion picture logic.

While Gehr's earlier films are of considerable interest, there is no doubt that *Serene Velocity* established his reputation as an important filmmaker, and, despite the remarkable films he's made since 1970—*Eureka* (1974–79) and *Table* (1976) most notably, perhaps—it remains the film most people who are aware of Gehr know him by, and for good reason: *Serene Velocity* creates an experience that is rigorously simple (even minimal), but visually fascinating and conceptually fertile. Basically, all the viewer sees, for 23 minutes, is a bare, institutional hallway (specifically, a hallway in a classroom building at the State University of New York at Binghamton, where Gehr taught for a time), filmed by a stationary camera. While *Serene Velocity* is not a single-shot film, like *Morning, Wait,* and a number of subsequent Gehr films, it does focus the viewer's gaze on a single, limited area for an extended duration. While the view is continuous, however, it is far from uninterrupted. When *Serene Velocity* was first shown to audiences, viewers were often puzzled about how Gehr had produced the film's pulsating, superactive image. In fact, the means were not complicated, though it took a film-maker entirely free of preconceptions about how movies are made to think of them. Having positioned his camera to look down the hallway, Gehr filmed the space four frames at a time, beginning midway along the focal range of his zoom lens and adjusting the zoom first in one direction, then in the opposite direction from the lens's midpoint, in equal and progressive alternating increments, until he had filmed the space from virtually every position between the midpoint and the two ends of the lens's focal range. The resulting film is serial both graphically (the hallway is all squares and rectangles within squares) and temporally (the film maintains its pulsating four frame beat throughout); it allows the viewer to study the way in which Gehr's procedure transforms the space and the viewer's experience.

When I first saw *Serene Velocity,* I was infuriated. I had no idea of what I was supposed to be seeing, of how I should be affected by the film. As I remember, I was annoyingly vocal about this, commenting audibly to the person next to me about how "ridiculous" this film was. But as the months went by, I found I couldn't get *Serene Velocity* out of my mind, and, much to my own surprise, that I was looking forward to seeing it again. By the end of a year I had decided that the film had been a healthy shock and was using it in my teaching to shock my students' cinematic complacency in the way my own complacency had been shocked. I discovered that if I could allow myself to actually *look* at the film, I could see a set of interesting developments occurring in what had originally struck me as an unchanging image. Gehr's incremental adjustments of the lens continually change the particulars of what we see in the hall, and over the film's 23 minutes, cause the experience of watching the film to evolve rather dramatically. As the zoom lens gradually moves us back and forth along the hall, the doors, ashtrays, and other details of the hallway move in and out of our awareness: at one focal length we may see a certain door; a few moments later and a few increments further along the focal range of the lens, the door has disappeared. While

all changes in the hallway are created by the rigorous procedure Gehr devised for the camera, near the conclusion of the film we can see, from the light in the glass of the doors at the far end of the hallway, that it's dawn.

As in *Morning,* the "subject" of *Serene Velocity* can be seen as a metaphor (and more than a metaphor) for the particular element of film technology which allows the "subject" to be recorded in precisely the way we see it: the hallway is to the building what the lens is to the camera; both are long, narrow spaces which provide access to other spaces. Or, to put it another way, the zoom lens is the "hallway" through which light travels from outside the camera into the photosensitive darkness, the corridor through which the spaces outside of the camera pass and reconfigure in the emulsion within the camera. If the camera box is a miniaturization and intensification of the rooms in which we live, lenses are miniaturizations and intensifications of the spaces by means of which these rooms are accessed by the eye and mind. Even the fact that the window at the end of the hallway becomes light at dawn might work within this parallel: in many movie cameras the end of a roll of film is signaled by a light one sees in the view finder.

Serene Velocity does more than develop an ingenious parallel between its ostensible visual subject and the particular means by which this subject is revealed. The silent evolution of the imagery of the hallway makes available a wide range of different film experiences, some of them, paradoxically, the opposite of others. In fact, the film's primary voyage through the hallway/lens is an axis along which these other experiences are ranged. Of course, to a degree, what anyone sees during a screening of *Serene Velocity* depends on that individual's personal state of mind. Perhaps the most obvious has already been referred to—the feeling of being thrown relentlessly backward and forward four times each second (the lens was readjusted every 4 frames; the film is screened at 16 frames per second). Since Gehr was moving incrementally away from the midpoint of the zoom lens focal range toward the extremes of either end of the focal range, the perceptual gap between successive four-frame units of the film grows continually greater for 23 minutes. If one is attempting to focus on each successive image, the dislocation created by the changes in successive units becomes quite exhausting. Of course, most of us do not maintain our attention on *Serene Velocity* at a single, unvarying level. Indeed, as violent as the successive changes in image can feel, they can be instantly transformed by the eye/mind. If one does not attempt to see the successive images of the hallway as individual three-dimensional spaces revealed in Renaissance perspective, if one doesn't rigorously focus in on the *successive* images, *Serene Velocity* can seem to be a flat, graphically distinct, nearly abstract image which regularly flashes between two states, like a neon sign. In fact, if we see the image as the two-dimensional space it really is, rather than as the three-dimensional space it is an illusion of, the film can seem quite meditative: the square-within-square organization created by the lines of the doorways and light fixtures can cause the image to seem mandala-like. In other words, the film is simultaneously violent and meditative, depending on the nature of the visual experience the viewer decides to participate in at any given moment.

Other viewing experiences of *Serene Velocity* depend on the particulars of what one focuses on. At times when I've shown the film in classroom situations where my attention is primarily on the reactions of students, rather than on the film itself on the screen, the film has seemed almost to stand out from the screen as though it were a three-dimensional object with a presence all its own. In other instances, I've understood the joke Ken Jacobs made about *Serene Velocity* when he introduced the film at SUNY-Binghamton the first time I saw it: Jacobs said he found it a *sexy* film. Of course, on one level nothing could be less sexy than an institutional hallway, and yet, if one focuses on the red "EXIT" sign above the doorway that bisects the hallway, especially near the end of the film when the gap between the successive images is particularly dramatic, the exit sign seems to thrust forward toward us, as though it were a phallus.

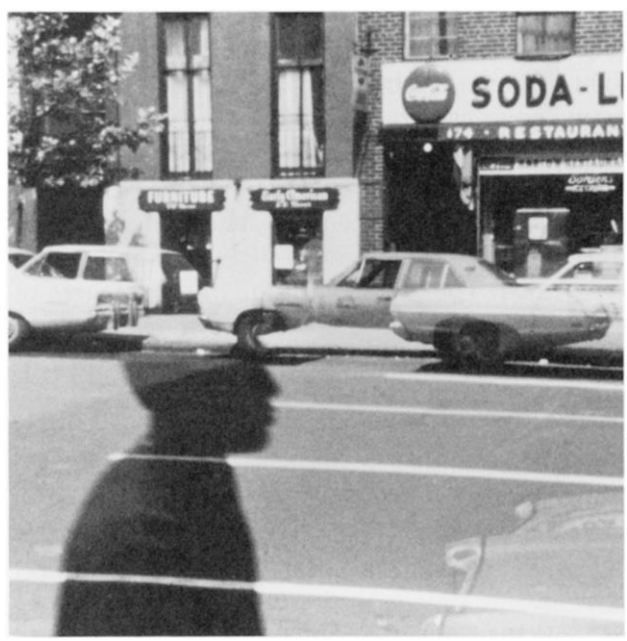
Once viewers have discovered that *Serene Velocity* is proceeding in a specific, predictable direction at a uniform rate, and that there is no one correct way of looking at the film, some viewers experiment with the specifics of their own apprehension of the imagery: at some point during my second viewing, I began blinking my eyes so as to try to see only one set of images of the hall, or to

focus on a specific detail visible in only one set of the alternating images. Of course, the very opportunity for the viewer to choose how to see a particular film is itself an implicit critique of the assumption that any movie should be apprehended in one particular way and that within the film each individual cinematic moment has a precise function in insuring that this one form of apprehension occurs.

The fact that Gehr is able to energize one of the dullest contemporary spaces (what is duller than an institutional hallway?) into a complex visual/conceptual experience is more than a tribute to his imagination; it dramatizes his aesthetic position. For Gehr, the magic of the movie camera is its ability to free us from visual habits, especially those we've developed at the movie theater—those which have become institutionalized in the film industry and in a good many of the educational organizations which train film-makers. The industrial history of film has impoverished our sight by endlessly reconfirming a narrow image of in-theater experience, in which each narrative moment we experience is a means for delivering us to the film's conclusion; in *Serene Velocity,* Gehr transforms a space designed for the purpose of delivering students to the rooms where they have educational business to attend to (a space which in a conventional film would have much the same function) into a highly energized, multifaceted visual experience interesting and memorable for itself, and for what it reveals about conventional moviegoing.

If none of the films Gehr has completed since *Serene Velocity* has achieved that film's reputation, several of the films are of equal interest and all are worth seeing: a new Gehr film remains something of an event. In *Still* (1969–1970), by far Gehr's longest film (54½ minutes), the camera looks out a window at a Brooklyn street scene. *Still* divides into roll-long segments: the first of these is divided into four subsections; the final four are presented complete. Within these sections, Gehr explores the perceptual possibilities of the gap between the three-dimensional world outside the camera and the two-dimensional nature of the filmstrip and the projected film image. As Hollis Frampton put it, *Still* posits the question, "What is the location of the surface that we believe we're looking at?"[1] Throughout *Still* we see a street scene—not always in the same framiing—with a distinct foreground and background, and we see the people and vehicles which were in this background as it was recorded *and* "ghosts" of people and vehicles recorded in the same scene at another time. The combination of the "real" people and vehicles and the ghosts, and the continual subtle visual alterations as the light changes within and between shots makes for a fascinating and subtly magical panorama that is enhanced by Gehr's manipulation of traffic sounds: sometimes they're presented in synch, sometimes in ambiguous relationships to the imagery (is a particular sound recorded "in synch" but made by a vehicle that never enters the frame?).

While *Still* is slow and stately, *Shift* (1972–1974) is high-spirited and comparatively fast-moving: in fact, it may be Gehr's most accessible film. The two films do, however, have a good deal in common. Like *Still* (and like *Transparency* and *Eureka,* as well) *Shift* focuses on a roadway, a city street in this



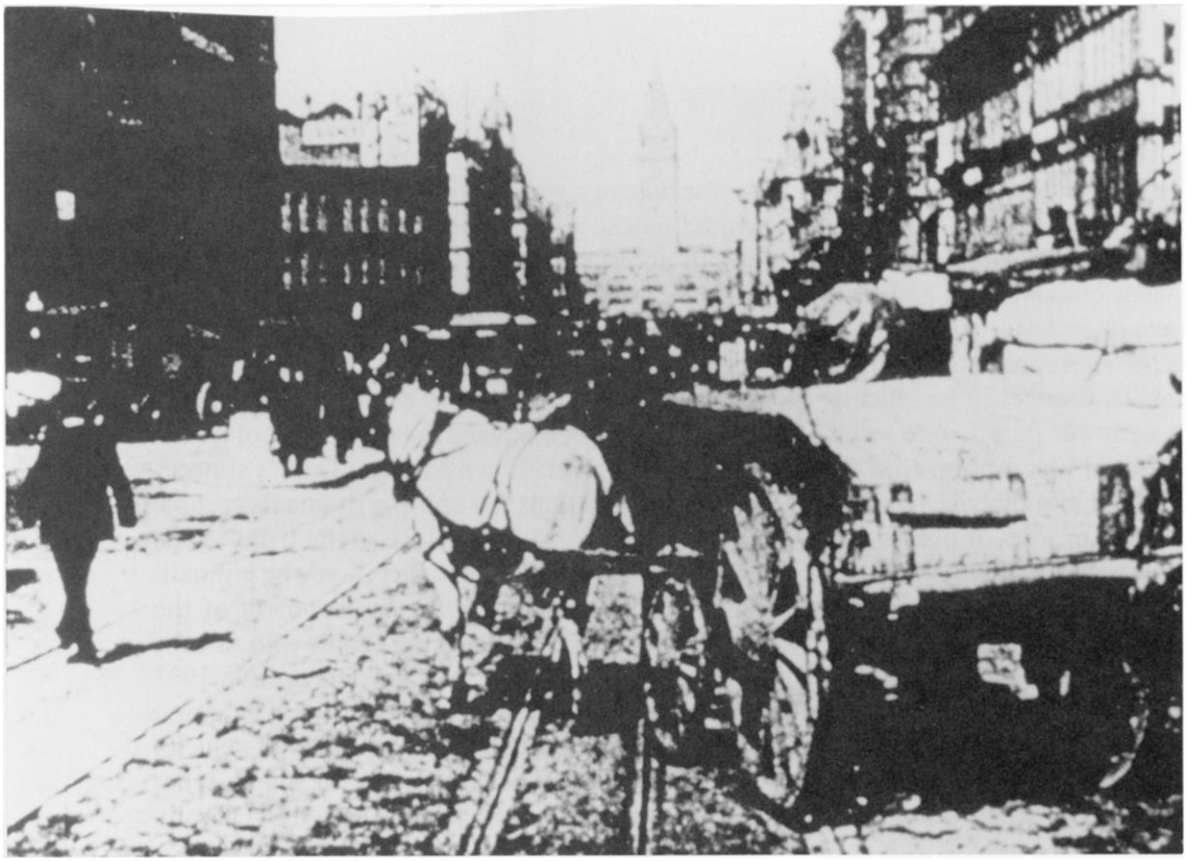
Ernie Gehr's *Still*

In the United States, Gehr's films are distributed by Canyon Cinema in San Francisco and the Filmmakers' Cooperative in New York. Selected titles are available from the Museum of Modern Art and the American Federation of Arts in New York. In Canada, the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre distributes selected titles.

instance, which can be understood as a metaphor for—or, at least, as a reminder of the fundamental nature of—the strip of film stock on which imagery is printed: as vehicles move back and forth on the street, they move in and out of the frame. But while *Still* accepts the street scene as a ground in which a certain cinematic drama can be enacted, *Shift* continually toys with our perspective, especially with our conventional assumption that the imagery recorded on film will inevitably be recorded right side up and on a plane or a set of planes perpendicular to the camera. Early in *Shift,* Gehr frames the painted white lines on the street so that we continually misread the location of the plane these lines seem to define. The experiments with sync sound explored in *Still* are playfully extended in *Shift:* we may be looking at a car; we hear an engine start, but when we hear the car begin to move, the car we're looking at stays where it is. Other visual/auditory games are played with forward and reverse, with the movement of vehicles vs. the movement of the camera, and with editing and framing. Continuous bits of action are edited —shifted—so that what would normally be presented as a continuous movement becomes a puzzle; during the latter part of *Shift* the frame is bisected horizontally near the top so that a vehicle traveling through the image passes first through the bottom section of the frame then through the strip at the top. In one sense—and the same can be said of *Morning, Wait,* and other Gehr films—the overall structure of *Shift* is rather conventional: the film begins slowly, exploring a limited range of issues, then grows in complexity until the "climax" where various shifts (cars shifting gears, shifts in overall color tonality . . .) occur in dense complex passages.

If *Morning* can be said to encapsulate elements of the prehistory of cinema, Gehr's next film—*Eureka,* which Gehr worked on from 1974 through 1979 (sometimes under the title "Geography")—Gehr used a brief film made between 1903 and 1905, presumably to be shown at the front of a Hale's Tours coach.[2] By rephotographing the original single-shot film a frame at a time, Gehr stretched the trolley ride captured on the original film: the camera is mounted on the front of a trolley and records the trolley's journey from the moment it turns onto Market Street in San Francisco until it reaches the Ferry Building and the end of the line (where a wagon with "Eureka, California" printed on the side crosses the image). *Eureka* allows us access to at least two levels of cinema history. One is the social history of the early twentieth century, within which the history of cinema was beginning (the date on the Ferry Building—1896—is suggestive in a film-history context). The original film must have emphasized the excitement of a fast-moving trolley ride down Market; Gehr's slowed-down version retains the exciting moments (people move across the tracks so close to the front of the trolley that we can't imagine they won't be injured), but allows us to examine the environment of the street and the ways in which the people who saw the camera responded to it. Market Street circa 1903 seems to have been a model of functional anarchy: the roadway is crowded with all manner of vehicles and pedestrians, all of them vying for space. True, the vehicles on the right side of the road generally move in one direction; those on the left, the opposite way; but beyond this, it seems a case of every vehicle for itself. The energy of the street, the collision of the many different worlds represented by the varied vehicles, and the pleasure the people take in performing for the camera (some run along before it; at one point a curtain on the rear of a van is thrown open to reveal passengers) make *Eureka* a period piece with as much resonance as the most elaborate contemporary recreations of that era (Coppola's Lower East Side in *Godfather 2,* for example).

But while *Eureka* allows us to experience San Francisco at the beginning of the century—watching the film is reminiscent of the rides at Disney World and Epcot—Gehr's painstaking re-presentation of the original footage reveals a second form of history. In the years since the original film was shown, the prints of it which still exist have decayed, so that the contemporary viewer must experience the original imagery through a curtain of scratches and other forms of decomposition. The journey down the trolley tracks in *Eureka* is also a trip through the time which has intervened between then and now, as that time is represented indexically on the filmstrip. The fact that the original film was recorded from the front of a trolley makes this other historical process particularly suggestive since the essential mechanical technologies at work in trolleys and in cinema—and their shared limita-



Eureka: San Francisco's Market Street, ca. 1903

tion, friction—are historically related: both are on "tracks," after all. Of course, while *Eureka* is an elegy to a lost age and a decaying technology, it also reconfirms the remarkable power of cinema: we can still see these people; they are alive as we watch, looking through time at us as we move through their space—thanks to a process that is, like us, part material and part something more.

During the 1970s, Gehr also finished two short single-shot films—*Behind the Scenes* (1975) and *Untitled* (1977)—and *Table* (1976). In *Behind the Scenes* Gehr manipulates the sound track by editing and looping an old-time record of voices and music; the imagery is a lovely portrait of a woman who shyly interacts with Gehr working "behind the scenes." In *Untitled* Gehr focuses and refocuses on failling snow recorded against a brick wall. *Table* is a remarkable film, in which a table with objects arranged on top—a teapot, dishes . . . perfect composition for a still life—is rendered wildly energetic by a procedure reminiscent of Georges Méliès. By slightly rearranging the objects on the table and the position of the camera (or the table itself) in successive frames and frame clusters, Gehr locates the drama of *Table* in the space between consecutive positions of the substitution trick. The motion of the film seems to deconstruct the table's solidity as an object, but the dynamic energy field created by Gehr's relentless visual syncopation endows *Table* with a presence reminiscent of *Serene Velocity*. The use of red and blue filters enhances the 3-D feel created by the quiver and flicker of the imagery.

In 1981 Gehr finished *Mirage* and a second, longer *Untitled*. For *Mirage* Gehr found a way of creating a mystifying image which divides the frame into gorgeously colored horizontal bars. The number of bars, their relative size, their color and texture, and the speed and direction of the variations they undergo are continually changing. *Untitled: Part One, 1981* is a mosaic of brief shots of the feet of people walking on a sidewalk—for me, Gehr's least interesting film. In 1985, Gehr completed *Signal—Germany on the Air,* an extended study of an intersection in Berlin, juxtaposed with a complex sound montage recorded from German radio.

Notes

1. Scott MacDonald, *A Critical Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 54.
2. For information about Hale's Tours, see Raymond Fielding's "Hale's Tours: Ultrarealism in the Pre-1910 Motion Picture," in John L. Fell, ed., *Film Before Griffith* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 116–130.

Reviews

Scandal

Director: Michael Caton-Jones. Script: Michael Thomas. Photography: Michael Molloy. Music: Carl Davis. Editing: Angus Newton. Miramax.

Scandal: John Hurt as Stephen Ward

Whether or not most films can be said to be orchestrated around the "male gaze," Michael Caton-Jones's elegant film *Scandal* is orchestrated around nothing else. It may be one of the most voyeuristic films yet made. It falls short as an exposé either of the Profumo affair in general or of the framing and suicide of its real victim, Stephen Ward, in particular. But the film is very much an exposé all the same, an exposé of seeing and being seen.

The key moment in *Scandal* comes as Ward (John Hurt) is being interrogated, not very gently, by the police. By this stage he knew he was the man who knew too much and that, as a result, he was "for the drop." For him, the Profumo affair had not ended with the resignation of John Profumo from Harold Macmillan's Conservative government. Ward had already started to spill the beans about the affair's "security aspect" and had to be stopped. Criminal proceedings and, if possible, conviction, could discredit his word in advance. The police, acting on instructions, were on the lookout for as many offenses as possible with which Ward could be charged. The more mud thrown, the more chance that some of it would stick. On being told in the course of his interrogation of the number of people the police claimed were ready to testify against him (147: Christine Keeler alone was to be interviewed 24 times) and of the "filth" they had succeeded in raking up at the same time ("real pox-ridden harlots" and all) Ward, on edge, snaps off the side of the eyeglasses he is nervously toying with. "Oh dear, look at that," says his interrogator, neatly specifying what Ward will no longer be able to do very easily. (We later see Ward in his kitchen, fastening together his glasses with scotch tape, which he throws across the room in frustration; he is to wear the taped-together glasses at his trial.) Ward, if he was guilty of anything at all, was guilty of observation. Looking, or (if you will) leering and ogling are not normally considered indictable offenses in British courts of law, but they do shade over into voyeurism, as Ward seems to have been well aware. The masterstroke of *Scandal* is that Michael Caton-Jones makes sure that, watching it, we as spectators become aware of our own voyeurism too.

Ward liked looking at women, particularly women who liked being looked at. He had, in the words of the "Indian doctor" *Scandal* leaves unnamed (though his identify has long been known), "the most highly trained eye in London" for doing so. Ward's evident pleasure in looking at women, which up till this point in the film had been our pleasure too, is now snapped, broken, and is not to be regained. Ward's sense of sight, and through it ours as spectators, had been privileged in the earlier part of *Scandal.* But from this point onwards nothing Ward sees through his broken glasses is going to bring him any pleasure, least of all seeing Christine Keeler (Joanne Whalley-Kilmer) from the dock when he is on trial. *Scandal* untowardly romanticizes Ward's relationship with Keeler throughout, to the point of having her change the

color of her hair (shades of *Vertigo*) in his bathroom. In the film, they exchange warm glances when Keeler is on the witness-stand; in reality, Keeler too "shopped" (i.e., betrayed) Ward, perjured herself in court, and went to jail.

The pivotal scene where Ward nervously breaks his glasses is prefigured aptly enough by two parallel sequences seen from his point of view. These stand out visually and stylistically from the rest of *Scandal* by being shot in natural sunlight on the streets of London near where Ward lived. The first is at the beginning of the film, after the titles. We see Stephen Ward not just happy to be alive but glowing, beaming with happiness. (Anyone who thinks ecstasy a hard emotion for John Hurt to convey will have his or her preconceptions shattered right away.) Ward's eye is caught by an attractive young woman riding a bicycle. His gaze follows her around a corner. The camera pans slowly to the right. The young woman is showing some leg. We know what Ward is thinking. We are thinking it ourselves.

This sequence is reprised later in the film. By this stage, Profumo has resigned in disgrace from his position as War Minister in the cabinet, having admitted lying in a personal statement to that *sanctum sanctorum,* the House of Commons, about the "propriety" of his past relationship with Christine Keeler; and Eugene Ivanov, the Russian naval attaché who had also had a liaison with Keeler at Ward's (and, it was later to transpire, MI5's) instigation, had been recalled to the Soviet Union. Once again Ward, whose friends are now being encouraged by the police to desert him in droves, is out on the street, scanning the "talent," seeking solace in what he sees. Once again, we see from his point of view a young woman on a bicycle, and once again the camera pans to the right, following her round the corner. Only this time Ward's pleasure (and ours) is abruptly blocked. The camera comes to rest on the figure of the plainclothes police officer we've already seen picking off Ward's friends one by one. "Hello, Stephen," he says, as though he already knew him; his unappealing features fill the screen and obstruct Ward's view—then, and thereafter: for the remainder of the film, and for the rest of Ward's life.

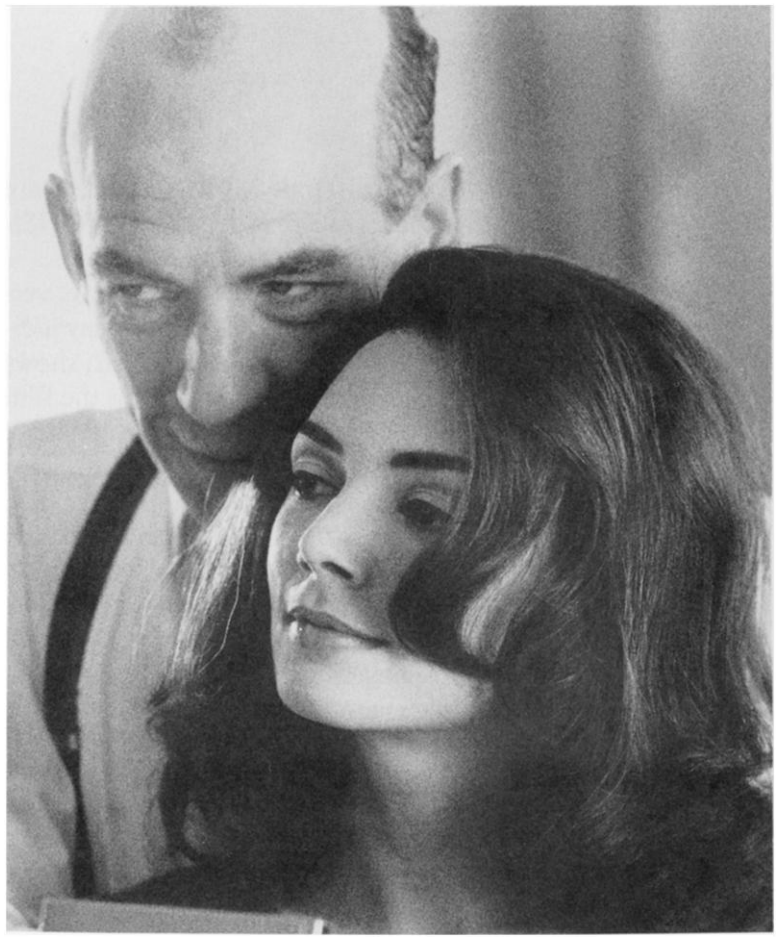
Scandal's artful figuration of the visual or specular is carefully judged, and helps hold the film together. It begins but does not end with Ward, who was an artist (he drew pictures at the Adolph Eichmann trial in Tel Aviv for the *Daily Telegraph* and is shown in *Scandal* sketching portraits at his own at the Old Bailey) as well as an osteopath with friends in high places. Both Christine Keeler and Mandy Rice-Davies (Bridget Fonda) also evidently relished the sexuality of looking, being looked at and seeing themselves in photographs. (The ostensible ambition of these would-be *demi-mondaines* was to become "models.") This is pointed up nicely by another sequence that stands out visually from the rest of the film, where Christine and Mandy get tarted up for a night on the town, at the Twenty-One Club, identified by Mandy as a "knocking shop." For a few glorious moments the screen is alive with garter-belts, thighs, breasts, and lipstick applied in extreme close-up. This would be a soft-porn interlude and nothing more but for the highly ad-agency nature of the photography and the fact that Christine and Mandy are not undressing but dressing—dressing up with a vengeance, literally girding their loins for the battle of the sexes. This, to pile delight on delight, turns out to involve a hilarious threesome with "Douglas Fairfax Junior" (sic) during which Mandy and Christine can't stop giggling at their own attempts to simulate moans of pleasure of the required kind. The music on the sound track as they dress up is the Shadows' "Apache," a tune whose Red-Indians-and-warpaint motif recalls the "Running Bear" dancing-girl sequence we've already seen the two women help perform at Murray's Club.

Scandal is more generally an orgy not of sex—what we see is pretty tame by present-day standards—but of the specular. Its characters see and define themselves in the gaze of others. They see themselves and portray themselves as they would like others to see them—Profumo in this mental hall of mirrors as the blameless statesman with "an army to run," Lord Astor as the victim of circumstances, Christine and Mandy as girls out for a good time, Ivanov as the impartial judge of British capitalist decadence. Only the notoriously indiscreet Ward has nothing to hide, at least as this film portrays him; it is others who want him silenced, others for whom Ward's eventual suicide

was to prove mightily convenient. Profumo may have been the war hero turned War Minister, but it was Ward who died that others might live.

Scandal penetrates all these various delusions and hypocrisies by using the apparently "realistic" device of the still-camera-within-the-frame. It does so, up to a point, to good effect. For the daytime swimming-pool sequence at Cliveden we see the action (including Profumo's planting an incriminating kiss on Keeler's thigh as she is riding on his shoulders, noticed by his wife) through the viewfinder of an ordinary pocket camera. But more usually it is press cameras that punctuate the action, and freeze it into monochrome stills. The stills then become a kind of record or reportage, and the film by extension a kind of semi-documentary report, as though the camera (unlike virtually every character in the film) does not and could not lie. The trouble is, however, that these monochrome freeze-frames also in effect try to pin down and locate the Profumo affair, distancing it from us as though it all took place in a bygone era when "procurement" (one of the charges levelled against Stephen Ward) had nothing to do with Pentagon weapons contracts and everything to do with vice and prostitution. It is in its attempts at distancing that *Scandal* is at its least convincing. Its own drawbacks, and for that matter its own history, reveal just how long-lasting and lingering, and not at all how remote and short-lived, the Profumo affair has been, from its own day down to our own.

In that perspective, *Scandal* is a cautious and carefully judged film—perhaps *too* much so. Unlike its characters, it resists easy temptations. The Profumo affair may have been a spectacle of sorts, a *grand guignol* as well as a masquerade, but *Scandal* goes to great lengths to avoid the spectacular. Even Ward's trial, *the* trial of the sixties in Britain, is dramatically muted (except when Mandy Rice-Davies is in the witness-box, stealing the show). We have no Mervyn Griffith-Jones describing Ward as "this filthy fellow," no Justice Marshall mistaking Mandy Rice-Davies for Marilyn Monroe—or observing, quite rightly, that Ward had been "abandoned in his extremity," not least by the pusillanimous Lord Astor, who is as conspicuous in his absence from the film trial as he was from the real one. *Scandal* deliberately and consistently plays down and de-melodramatizes the political scandal that is



Scandal: Ian McKellen as John Profumo, Joanne Whalley-Kilmer as Christine Keeler

its subject. The Profumo affair was, after all, a sensational mélange of politics, sex, vice, espionage, hypocrisy in high and low places, and betrayal. It had, on top of these, sub-plots involving national security, race, class, money, sleaze, disinformation and cover-up (do these sound familiar?).

Of all these, it is betrayal that comes through most consistently, though (it could be argued) not forcefully enough. The style of the film is not forceful at all, but low-key and lackluster; even the early night-club sequences at Murray's are sleazy rather than garish, gaudy but deadpan. Interiors throughout the film, and there are plenty of these, are generally lit in pink or blue (blue being the color fo the Conservative party, and pink that of Mandy Rice-Davies's get-up at Ward's trial) and are meticulously reconstructed. Real locations—Wimpole Mews (where Stephen Ward lived), Clivedon (Lord Astor's country seat), the *cottage orné* which Ward rented from Astor—appear to have been used wherever possible. Others—Christine Keeler's mother's home (a converted railway carriage in Wraysbury),

the interior of Ward's flat, Murray's Club—are painstakingly reconstructed in a beautiful job (Simon Holland's) of set design.

But, in the end, verisimilitude is one thing, veracity another, as the Profumo affair in its way indicated, and as *Scandal,* perhaps despite itself, shows all over again. By perpetuating half-truths the film is rather eerily in keeping with its subject-matter; a few caveats are in order to set the record straighter, if not straight. Ward at first publicly, on TV, backed up Profumo's mendacious denial of any "impropriety" with Keeler, only to backtrack subsequently, though one would guess neither this, nor the fact that the peppy Many Rice-Davies attempted suicide, from seeing *Scandal.* There again, it is interesting to speculate why the film never goes for the jugular of the Establishment. It could in principle have done so without making of Ward a gentle and blameless tragic hero. Would it not have been quite enough to have portrayed Ward as what he was, someone who was hounded to death, someone thrown to the wolves, someone ritually sacrificed in one of the most disgraceful travesties of British justice the other side of Ulster, someone who killed himself in transparent conviction of his own innocence and of the guilt of others?

Nor is this the only place where *Scandal* backs off where it could have hit home. Profumo's lying statement before the Commons is rendered accurately (though his wife's presence in the Visitor's Gallery is not hinted at), but here again it's a case of the truth but not the whole truth. The film glosses over the fact that Profumo had been dragged out of bed the night before the big day by four of his cabinet colleagues and his lawyer in order to draw up his "personal" statement, which was in reality a collective product. *Scandal*'s version of the speech as delivered in the Commons interestingly enough omits the final paragraph. ("I shall not hesitate to issue writs for libel and slander if scandalous allegations are repeated outside the House.") The reason for this omission is not simply that *Scandal* is concerned to portray Profumo as hapless, weak, and confused (Ian McKellan looks uncomfortable in the role, in a very well-acted film), while his words smack of a "manly" bravado—let my skulking detractors come out from behind the skirts of parliamentary privilege, and I'll see they get what's coming to them. (Profumo subsequently sued both *Paris-Match* and *Tempo Illustrado,* accepting £50 from the latter in an out-of-court settlement.)

It's hard not to conclude that the real reason for *Scandal*'s reluctance to approach the subject of libel is the same kowtowing to absurdly restrictive press and libel laws that stymied and prevented reporting of the Profumo affair in the first place. It is after all a matter of record that one recent book on the Profumo/Ward scandal, one that can freely be read anywhere else in the world, was recalled from libraries and bookshops in the UK and actually pulped (shades of *Spycatcher*), simply because one of the police officers who had interrogated Ward, and who was believed dead, turned up alive and kicking in Australia. He promptly and successfully sued the authors and publisher for defamation. The success of this figure, who actually features in *Scandal,* helps explain why the Profumo affair defies any attempt at historical distancing, or pinning down. It casts a long shadow. *Scandal* started life as a projected TV mini-series from which British TV backed down and pulled out when it was already in production. We can only speculate why, but I have my suspicions, which are helped along by the eponymous "Indian doctor" and "Douglas Fairfax, Junior." As it stands, the film, sad to say, frequently betrays its fragmented, episodic origins: chronology and narrative are often muddy, and characters drop in and out unexplained, like uninvited guests. (That Peter Rachman, Mandy Rice-Davies's loathesome slum-lord lover, was dead by the time of Ward's trial is never mentioned.) A TV mini-series might have set these lapses to rights, but this we shall never know; "Masterpiece Theatre," I'm afraid, is going to have to make do with something else, something more "British." (How about yet another re-run of "Yes, Minister"? It might just fit the bill.)

At the end of *Scandal* a couple of messages, each of them a half-truth, roll onto the screen. Taken together, they suggest not just how murky the Profumo affair still remains, but also that it's not yet even over. We are told first that in November 1964 Macmillan's government fell, "exhausted by the scandal." True enough, although nothing we have seen in *Scandal,* which ends with Ward's suicide in July 1963, has any immediate bearing on the end of this particular, unsavory era. Most of

the events portrayed in the film took place in 1961, but became public knowledge only after Ward's death. What came in between July 1963 and November 1964 was not just a bloodied Macmillan's desperate attempts to sit on the Philby scandal, where real, heavy-duty espionage was involved, but also the Denning Report of September 1963. This piece of whitewash had its terms of reference restricted to the (unknowable) "security aspects" of the Profumo affair, which were held in all seriousness to exclude Ward (even though we now know that Ward had helped the MI5 set up what was supposed to be a "honey trap" for Ivanov, whose name had been forwarded by the Russian defector Oleg Penkovsky, with Keller). The Denning Report succeeded in prolonging the Profumo affair it was supposed to have put to rest, and became part of the scandal it was supposed to have explained away.

The second half-truth that rolls up on the screen before the credits take us out and away tells us of the date of Stephen Ward's funeral and adds that "nobody came." True enough; but a wreath was sent by (among others) Kenneth Tynan, John Osborne, Arnold Wesker, Joe Orton, and Penelope Gilliat, who signed a card "to Stephen Ward, victim of hypocrisy." It does not diminish Ward, but it does diminish this film, to point out that we are not yet done with this self-same hypocrisy.

PAUL THOMAS

Books, Books, and More Books

The Annual *Film Quarterly* Book Survey

In the humanities, the reviewing of books must try to fulfill the essential role of testing new ideas that the replication of experiments plays in science. A scrupulous mutual examination of arguments is the only way in which usable and important ideas can possibly be sorted out and given attention by a community of scholars. Hence, a field that scants book-reviewing is a field whose intellectual future is dubious.

There is no doubt that a genuine community of scholars has grown up in the film field, mostly during the existence of this magazine (since 1958). This community maintains scholarly associations, publishes journals, co-opts new members into its academic ranks, lays claim to university budget funds, secures grants, and entertains a succession of dominant notions which prove more or less productive of insights, satisfactions, vigorous disagreements, and even sometimes influence on production projects. This process rests, however, upon a troubling paucity of published book reviewing. (Other, behind-the-scenes "reviewing" of course takes place for tenure, job, and publication purposes.) While virtually all film journals and magazines review some books, *Film Quarterly* is the only publication that has tried to reflect in its book coverage a fairly complete sense of what has been written in the field. A few outstanding books get ample coverage in many publications; many good ones get almost no coverage at all. In this era of over-production of books in all fields, this situation may be understandable, but it is not *acceptable.*

These observations are a prelude to a plea, both to other editors and to members of the film community: please see what you can do to increase the reviewing of film books! Journals could devote

the events portrayed in the film took place in 1961, but became public knowledge only after Ward's death. What came in between July 1963 and November 1964 was not just a bloodied Macmillan's desperate attempts to sit on the Philby scandal, where real, heavy-duty espionage was involved, but also the Denning Report of September 1963. This piece of whitewash had its terms of reference restricted to the (unknowable) "security aspects" of the Profumo affair, which were held in all seriousness to exclude Ward (even though we now know that Ward had helped the MI5 set up what was supposed to be a "honey trap" for Ivanov, whose name had been forwarded by the Russian defector Oleg Penkovsky, with Keller). The Denning Report succeeded in prolonging the Profumo affair it was supposed to have put to rest, and became part of the scandal it was supposed to have explained away.

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The Annual *Film Quarterly* Book Survey

In the humanities, the reviewing of books must try to fulfill the essential role of testing new ideas that the replication of experiments plays in science. A scrupulous mutual examination of arguments is the only way in which usable and important ideas can possibly be sorted out and given attention by a community of scholars. Hence, a field that scants book-reviewing is a field whose intellectual future is dubious.

There is no doubt that a genuine community of scholars has grown up in the film field, mostly during the existence of this magazine (since 1958). This community maintains scholarly associations, publishes journals, co-opts new members into its academic ranks, lays claim to university budget funds, secures grants, and entertains a succession of dominant notions which prove more or less productive of insights, satisfactions, vigorous disagreements, and even sometimes influence on production projects. This process rests, however, upon a troubling paucity of published book reviewing. (Other, behind-the-scenes "reviewing" of course takes place for tenure, job, and publication purposes.) While virtually all film journals and magazines review some books, *Film Quarterly* is the only publication that has tried to reflect in its book coverage a fairly complete sense of what has been written in the field. A few outstanding books get ample coverage in many publications; many good ones get almost no coverage at all. In this era of over-production of books in all fields, this situation may be understandable, but it is not *acceptable.*

These observations are a prelude to a plea, both to other editors and to members of the film community: please see what you can do to increase the reviewing of film books! Journals could devote

more space and editorial energy to their book sections. Readers could write to editors requesting reviews of books they are curious to know others' views about. Contributors could volunteer to write more reviews, and suggest books they feel journals should review. It may even be time to think of starting a new journal to do nothing but deal with books in the film (or perhaps "media") field.

It is also desirable to secure more candid reviewing. Without honest discussion, views cannot possibly contest openly and fairly. Yet the film studies profession is so ingrown at present that some books do not get reviewed frankly simply because people do not want to upset powerful applecarts.

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Autobiographies & Biographies

On the Edge

The Life & Times of Francis Coppola

By Michael Goodwin and Naomi Wise. New York: Morrow, 1989. $22.95

Coppola wouldn't talk to Goodwin and Wise for this book; he said he isn't ready for any biography yet. However, since both authors were San Francisco film journalists during his reign, and he is a compulsively fascinating character, they have followed his evolution close-in. Moreover, Goodwin once worked for Coppola on *City,* a charmingly funky local magazine that he bought and proceeded to wreck by trying to turn it into something like *New York.* The book appeared shortly before Coppola's latest financial crisis, a bankruptcy staged during the shooting of *Godfather III*—from which insiders expect Coppola to rise once again, phoenix-like. As Goodwin and Wise quote an old friend of Coppola's, he believes creation happens only on the brink of disaster.

By interviewing as many Coppola associates as would talk, which was a great many, Goodwin and Wise have assembled a comprehensive and immensely readable story of what seems to me, despite its triumphs, to a surprising degree a wasted life. (They don't go this far.) Nobody denies Coppola's formidable directing talents, which have tended to emerge most forcefully in films where he was a hired hand and not carrying on as a self-produced *auteur*—though *The Conversation* is undoubtedly a strong and original work, and Goodwin and Wise give high marks also to *Rumble Fish.* But his talents are the product of a paradoxical personality whose strengths and weaknesses, as Goodwin and Wise portray them, are almost one and the same. They are fundamentally in sympathy with the man, somewhat as the writer of a tragedy must be in sympathy with the hero, whatever his "tragic flaw" (or crazy ideas). It was Coppola's overweening confidence and absorption in his own life drama that enabled him to pull off creative coups, but those same qualities also led him to make dreadful mistakes. Perhaps the greatest irony in this book filled with bitter ironies is that Coppola, who after the *Godfathers* has never touched a script without reducing it to structural rubble, first gained a reputation as a script doctor. His later work has often involved powerful *scenes,* but he has never again achieved a powerful whole film. (Yes, it is possible, though the news reports from Rome are not encouraging, that he will pull it off again with *Godfather III.*)

What Coppola does have besides enormous chutzpah is charm sufficient to be referred to as seductive, and the book is very successful in conveying the convivial atmosphere that Coppola cre-

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ates around himself; he did indeed preside over his studio (and his family) like a Medici prince. And his legendary energy, resourcefulness, and resilience are chronicled by Goodwin and Wise with delightful detail and nuance. For instance, when the backers of the totally out-of-control *Cotton Club* finally decided that Coppola and Robert Evans had to be brought under control, they sent a heavy from Las Vegas. (This is an idea that many studio executives must have entertained in the epoch of enfant-terrible directors like Coppola and Cimino; but at least the only studio that Coppola destroyed was his own, Zoetrope.) Coppola had a director's chair labelled for the man, cooked him spaghetti, and turned him into a sympathizer. The film, however, remained basically unsalvagable.

This is by no means your ordinary Hollywood biography, but a thoroughly researched and solid contribution to the history of *auteurism* in the American film industry, complete with bibliography. It ends, characteristically, with a unique and playful touch: the Epilogue offers the recipe for *The Godfather's* spaghetti sauce.

ERNEST CALLENBACH

The Hustons

By Lawrence Grobel. New York: Scribner's, $24.95.

Grobel's multi-biography of the Huston dynasty appears to be authorized both in terms of access and of candor, the candor evident in interviews and enlarged by their juxtaposed, sometimes venomous perceptions. In sum, Walter comes across as a warm hearted, well-intentioned womanizer, John a complicated man who treated his wives and mistresses abominably. The current generation display effects of their odd upbringings to greater or less degree, depending on ages and specifics.

Huston the director commandeers the bulk of the 787 pages of text. He met Grobel for a *Playboy* interview and then supported the larger project—answering, Grobel says, all questions except for one about his fifth wife's purported bisexuality. Information about aborted and unrealized film projects enlarge our familiarity with Huston's undertakings. His enthusiasms toward particular ventures appear to have varied enormously. At times it seems the quality of his work depended on how deeply he felt toward whatever novel or story underlay the script. At best he elicited performances by the subtlest of strategies and indirections. Actors in the successful movies loved him. At worst he bullied anybody around who was subordinate or weak, or else he just didn't care. Like Hitchcock, Huston's graphic sophistication enabled him to oversee design and staging with an impressive skill. With Hitchcock one thinks of realistic cartoons; Huston was a painter, and he knew art history. His color experiments in *Moby Dick, Moulin Rouge,* and *Reflections in a Golden Eye* are still extraordinary. He judged performances more by ear than eye. Technicians speak with awe of his ability to envision camera placements and blocking almost instantly on the set. He was patient because that was efficient, and confident about low shooting ratios because it frustrated editing that might otherwise escape his control. Like Hitchcock and Ford, Huston played vicious practical jokes on his people. Power, condescension, and manipulation appear to be basic to his character. Perhaps envy drifts into Orson Welles's tribute during the AFI Huston Celebration: ". . . the grand panjandrums of the industry, from Stark to Spiegel, there is not a specimen of that ferocious breed whom John, when need arises, cannot most sweetly cause to lie down, roll over . . . and purr." (737)

Huston's friendships included Buckminster Fuller, J. Paul Getty, Noguchi, Auden, Spender and Henry Moore. Others considered his intellectual pretensions hollow. Enthusiasms for dogs, horses, and prizefighters lasted all his life. Reading Grobel, one seems to trace a career that begins with adventure, deepens the cynicisms nurtured in big-league Hollywood, and ends with a contempt toward everything that struck him as bereft of macho grace and courage—a hierarchy largely absent of women except for Katharine Hepburn, but one that included Truman Capote. Many sexual partners spoke of an emotionally empty Huston, contradicted on occasion by some unexpected generosity. William Hamilton is quoted as saying in 1984: "I thought, Jesus, he was just ga-ga. He was talking about what sounded like old New Deal talk.

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The guy was just riding on the past. Then I saw [*Prizzi's Honor*] and I thought it was terrific! And I realized, back to those days when I was involved with him, what he really needed was a perverse subject. Then he was in business!" (760)

Many readers may take issue with some of Grobel's film pronouncements: "When John Barrymore appeared in *Don Juan,* his voice played on a record accompanying the picture on the screen." (117) "According to Huston, [*Wild Boys of the Road*] was never made . . ." (147) "In *The Maltese Falcon* Bogart smacks Mary Astor and tells her she's got to take the fall." (762) (Well, Spade touches Brigid's larynx with his thumb.) Meta Wilde, script supervisor, describes a complicated maneuver earlier in the film: "The camera followed Greenstreet and Bogart from one room into another; there the camera moved up and . . . , then panned from left to right and back to Bogart's drunken face; the next pan shot was to Greenstreet's massive stomach from Bogart's point of view. . . . there was the understanding that we were attempting something purely cinematic, never tried before. . . . After a nerve-racking seven minutes or so Huston shouted 'Cut' and 'PRINT IT!' A shout went up and crew members heartily applauded Bogart, Greenstreet, and Edeson and his camera specialists." (220) Lost on the cutting room floor?

JOHN FELL

If This Was Happiness

A Biography of Rita Hayworth

By Barbara Leaming. New York: Viking, 1989. $19.95.

Rita Hayworth's long, much-publicized bout with Alzheimer's Disease and her rather early death seemed to represent yet another example of a woman victimized by Hollywood, the mass media, and by patriarchal culture in general. Barbara Leaming's richly detailed and well documented portrait of Hayworth provides ample evidence for that assumption. The central revelation of this book is Hayworth's sexual abuse by her father, a failed vaudevillian and nightclub entertainer. Leaming states that this incest was an overarching presence in Hayworth's life; although Leaming could draw a bit more on the abundant material of current psychoanalytic theory to support this portrait, her argument is sufficiently convincing.

Hayworth's father not only abused her physically and psychologically, he was the first in a long line of men to "shape" the actress's public image. While still a youngster, Hayworth was forced to pose as her own mother when she became her father's dance partner in his club act. From her earliest years until late in her career, she was subjected to the most outrageous manipulation by vain, sometimes disturbed, or outright pathological men.

Leaming suggests that Hayworth fell into such disastrous relationships with men as a psychological consequence of her child abuse. Like many victims of such abuse, she associated affection with submission and punishment, expecting a man to be domineering yet "fatherly," thus repeating the familiar situation of childhood. Indeed most of the men in Hayworth's life fit this tragic scenario. Her first husband was a sadistic pimp (so described by most of his contemporaries), forcing her into casting-couch relationships with producers (which she constantly resisted) to further her career. Hayworth's fourth husband, singer Dick Haymes, was a profoundly disturbed alcoholic who repeated and amplified many of the horrors of her childhood. Her marriages to Orson Welles and Aly Khan were a bit less ugly, yet both of these men, while more gracious to her, further damaged her with their unfaithfulness. In later years, Khan engaged Hayworth in a custody battle over a child just as Hayworth's life with Haymes took a serious downturn.

The saddest parts of Rita Hayworth's last years were the mis-diagnosis of her disease (she lived with Alzheimer's for more than 20 years) and her humiliations as the disease worsened. She continued to make pointless public appearances, her increasingly erratic behavior seen as the result of alcoholism; drinking may have indeed aggravated the rapid advance of Alzheimer's. Since little was known about the ailment itself until the early 1980s, Hayworth was truly isolated, her shrinking circle of friends bewildered by her conduct. In this, she became the classic example of the stricken person as outcast, and this idea seemed to hold even when

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her daughter made known the facts of her mother's illness. (It is fair to say that Hayworth's case was the first to bring Alzheimer's Disease fully into public view.)

Much of this book can be read as a case study of what the old Hollywood did to its female stars. There are appalling stories of how Hayworth had her hairline reshaped, her hair recolored, her image shaped into the negligee-clad, big-busted sex goddess who graced barracks lockers and nuclear bombs. At no point in Rita Hayworth's life was she allowed control over significant decisions. Even her involvement in projects that truly showcased her talent was motivated by men; a case in point is her fine work in Robert Rossen's underrated film *They Came to Cordura*—a project forced upon her by her fifth husband, producer James Hill.

Leaming remarks that during her final days Hayworth spoke very little, except to utter occasional, disconnected phrases, such as the words Leaming uses to close the book: "He used to do that," "He told me how to do that." While Leaming says no one could interpret her meaning, the implication is clear, and Leaming's argument is reiterated by those cryptic words. "He" indeed told her exactly what to do, and Rita Hayworth became lost early on to the demands of men.

CHRISTOPHER SHARRETT

Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye

By Andrew Robinson. Berkeley: Univerversity of California Press, 1990. $29.95.

Ray has retained the attention of the film world from his astonishing *Pather Panchali* through the classics that followed *(The World of Apu, The Music Room, Charulata)* to such recent works as *The Chess Players* and *The Home and the World.* Robinson, a British writer who speaks Bengali, has produced the first book to view Ray's prodigious achievements from both an Indian and Western perspective. He draws a subtle portrait of Ray's extraordinarily gifted family, and provides unique background on his Calcutta cultural surroundings. With 150 illustrations, including vivid sections from Ray's shooting notebooks and many previously unpublished photographs.

Fasten Your Seat Belts

The Passionate Life of Bette Davis

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Lawrence J. Quirk's book on Bette Davis is by far the spiciest of the season's star biographies. Yet for all the details about Davis's sex life (we learn, among many other things, how she brought Howard Hughes to orgasm), the author is very respectful of his subject, both as person and artist. The focus on the "passionate" life of Bette Davis is an attempt it seems to dispel the common image of the actress as the haughty, arrogant woman that was very much her screen and public persona. While she was indeed arrogant and more than a little difficult to work with, she is depicted here as warm-blooded and sensual, with great humor and a love of occasional hell-raising. Davis's very repressed and impoverished early life is offered as explanation for the tough image that in fact represented a large part of her personality.

Rich with anecdotes, Quirk's book gives a detailed, fast-paced sense of Davis's very full life, from her failed marriages and difficult relationships with her children (especially her daughter B.D., who wrote an angry tell-all portrait of her mother), to her work with what seems like all of Hollywood's mainstay actors, producers, and directors (it is noteworthy, however, that this major actress appeared in relatively few films of real value, and was grossly degraded in the "horror hag" vehicles of her later years). Davis's hot temper and cavalry-trooper language appear throughout the book, but this helps achieve a multi-dimensional and unvarnished picture. Like most star bios, *Fasten Your Seat Belts* spends relatively little time on critical appraisals of the actress's work, or attempts at insights into her craft. Still, this seems the definitive book thus far on the personal life and career of a formidable Hollywood legend.

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Ray has retained the attention of the film world from his astonishing *Pather Panchali* through the classics that followed *(The World of Apu, The Music Room, Charulata)* to such recent works as *The Chess Players* and *The Home and the World.* Robinson, a British writer who speaks Bengali, has produced the first book to view Ray's prodigious achievements from both an Indian and Western perspective. He draws a subtle portrait of Ray's extraordinarily gifted family, and provides unique background on his Calcutta cultural surroundings. With 150 illustrations, including vivid sections from Ray's shooting notebooks and many previously unpublished photographs.

Fasten Your Seat Belts

The Passionate Life of Bette Davis

By Lawrence J. Quirk. New York: Morrow, 1990. $21.95.

Lawrence J. Quirk's book on Bette Davis is by far the spiciest of the season's star biographies. Yet for all the details about Davis's sex life (we learn, among many other things, how she brought Howard Hughes to orgasm), the author is very respectful of his subject, both as person and artist. The focus on the "passionate" life of Bette Davis is an attempt it seems to dispel the common image of the actress as the haughty, arrogant woman that was very much her screen and public persona. While she was indeed arrogant and more than a little difficult to work with, she is depicted here as warm-blooded and sensual, with great humor and a love of occasional hell-raising. Davis's very repressed and impoverished early life is offered as explanation for the tough image that in fact represented a large part of her personality.

Rich with anecdotes, Quirk's book gives a detailed, fast-paced sense of Davis's very full life, from her failed marriages and difficult relationships with her children (especially her daughter B.D., who wrote an angry tell-all portrait of her mother), to her work with what seems like all of Hollywood's mainstay actors, producers, and directors (it is noteworthy, however, that this major actress appeared in relatively few films of real value, and was grossly degraded in the "horror hag" vehicles of her later years). Davis's hot temper and cavalry-trooper language appear throughout the book, but this helps achieve a multi-dimensional and unvarnished picture. Like most star bios, *Fasten Your Seat Belts* spends relatively little time on critical appraisals of the actress's work, or attempts at insights into her craft. Still, this seems the definitive book thus far on the personal life and career of a formidable Hollywood legend.

CHRISTOPHER SHARRETT

Lon Chaney: Master Craftsman of Make Believe

By Nathaniel Lester Ross. Los Angeles: Quality RJ, 1987, 1988.

As a piece of book production, this self-published biography of Lon Chaney is an amateurish disaster. Virtually every page has at least one typo, misspelling, missing verb, or dropped phrase, often several of each. A wacky numbering system makes the notes and the bibliography almost impossible to use. Chaney's credits on pages 239, 239a, and 240 are scrambled. The book should be withdrawn for ruthless editing. Yet it has value, for Ross portrays Chaney's life and defines what is knowable about it in greater detail than anyone else has done to date. He has unearthed a photograph of Chaney's father (a deaf-mute, like Chaney's mother) and fleshed out Chaney's years as an actor-stage manager with itinerant theater companies (Lon's original acting ambitions, it seems, were centered on comedy rather than horror). Using old city directories, he has traced Chaney's passage from humble to classier addresses during his Los Angeles years (he moved from downtown to Hollywood/Cahuenga to Beverly Hills, and the symbolism of this itinerary hasn't change a bit in 60 years). Ross has also turned up some harsh details about Chaney's failed first marriage to Creva Creighton (including a press account of her attempted suicide). Commentators have often waxed ironic because Chaney died, supposedly from throat cancer, just 53 days after the premiere of his only sound film, the 1930 version of *The Unholy Three*. But Ross has provided a copy of Chaney's death certificate, which states that lung cancer killed him. He has little to say about Chaney's work except the usual fan's platitudes. His numbing prose ("The foregoing can leave no doubt in your mind that the author's belief is that the nearer one comes to the present, the less the quality of motion picture fare") doesn't even begin to take the measure of his brilliant subject, one of the most famous, most mesmerising, yet most underexplored figures in film history. Those who already have an inkling of this will weep as they read Ross's sadly inadequate volume, but read it they should.

MICHAEL DEMPSEY

Hurricane Billy

The Stormy Life and Films of William Friedkin

By Nat Segaloff. New York: Morrow, 1990. $20.95

Sam Fuller is supposed to have fired off guns before his takes as a means of startling his actors; William Friedkin has preferred, on three occasions at least, to slug his performers to achieve a desired effect. The dustjacket of this book refers to its subject as "Director of *The French Connection* and *The Exorcist,*" which sums up how Friedkin is still best known. This intelligent, hard-driven craftsman—at once a literate adaptor of Harold Pinter, among others, and a throwback, Nat Segaloff's biography makes clear, to an older tradition of B-movie tabloid cinema—elevated himself out of the low-budget work he seems to be best suited for by lucking into an historical moment in the early 1970s. The two aforementioned monster hits (pun intended) perfectly caught the sour mood of the time, the curdled "law and order" era of Nixon and Agnew, and the "exorcism" of their administration which followed. Friedkin has been struggling ever since to catch a wave like that again.

Segaloff, a journalist himself whose very decent, non-tabloid style biography will no doubt be the standard reference on this interesting talent for some time to come, is aware of this—mentioning, for example, how Friedkin's big-budget disaster *Sorcerer* (1977) was "out of its own time. Begun during the brief period of self-examination that followed American involvement in Vietnam, it was finally released at a point of history when audiences, having examined themselves and not liked what they found, were opting for pure escapism." Despite Friedkin's inability to adapt his distinctively depressed thematics to the feel-good cinema of the Reagan years, Friedkin has, as a canny craftsman in the Fuller mode, managed to stay alive in the years since, making some accomplished work in the *noir* mode, most notably *To Live and Die in L.A.* (1985), and before that, the highly controversial *Cruising* (1980).

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GREGG RICKMAN

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PETER BATES

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Thomas, William Karl. *Lenny Bruce: The Making of a Prophet.* Shoe String Press, 925 Sherman Avenue, Hamden, CT 06514, 1989. $26.00 Pungent with the funkiness of the sixties, this well written memoir of life with the great comic is full of telling details without, somehow, telling any real details of what working with Bruce was like—that is, the work itself. By Thomas's account, he helped devise many of Bruce's early and best routines, did film and photography work for him, and suffered a lot of abuse which only turned into due appreciation near Bruce's death. He also led a well-spent life, full of New Orleans clubs, music, beautiful women, and adventures in Mexico and Hollywood. Although in the book's photos he looks like a Southern California beach boy, Thomas is a smart, sophisticated "underground" head whose relationship with Bruce was obvi-

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CHRISTOPHER SHARRETT

Criticism

Shakespeare, Cinema, and Society

By John Collick. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989.

Once we see that this book is part of a new British series on "Cultural Politics" we can predict fairly accurately what is to come. I say this to be descriptive, not dismissive: indeed, I think that John Collick's rambling study of *Shakespeare, Cinema and Society* is both vigorous and valuable, and presents useful alternatives to the persistent text-based and, in his words, Anglocentric approach to the study of films of Shakespeare. He has learned his lessons well from such critics as Catherine Belsey, Jonathan Dollimore, Graham Holderness, and Alan Sinfield, and at its best, despite frequent overstatements and occasional critical fussiness, this book is a worthy contribution to the ongoing polemical analysis of the cultural appropriation of Shakespeare by a legion of either knowing or unknowing ideologues—in this case film directors, corporations, and critics.

Throughout this book Collick strives to rescue Shakespeare from the Shakespeareans. To do so he rounds up the usual suspects—Romantic critics like Charles Lamb, who restrict our attention to the all-important transhistorical essence of Shakespeare found only in the poetry of the plays, and representatives of "imperial Shakespeare," like Laurence Olivier and the BBC—and makes some familiar accusations. Shakespearean film, like Shakespearean theater, is, it seems, dominated by an industrial-academic collaboration that enshrines Shakespeare as a spokesperson for the enduring values of Anglo-American culture. Shakespearean films typically highlight the splendor of material possessions, the dignity of heroic individuals as they contest with forces beyond their control, and the wonderful comedy produced by momentary collisions of the different classes and sexes on the way to affirming the hierarchical unity of society. The films that fall outside this ideological net are, Collick suggests, "marginalized" or misunderstood by the majority of critics, who act as custodians of "textual purity" and timeless values.

The true task of the critic, though, is not fidelity to Shakespeare but, as it were, fidelity to Gramsci and Althusser: we must "break out of the closed loop of formalist and prescriptive Shakespeare analysis" (p. 8) by re-contextualizing films, studying the variety of material conditions that envelop their production and reception. And this approach must be applied not only to the canonized handful of Shakespearean sound films from England and America that are the primary concern of modern critics, but also to the films that challenge conventional norms. Not surprisingly, Collick is particularly intrigued by Shakespeare as seen by "outsiders": counter-cultural film-makers (such as Derek Jarman and Orson Welles, though he criticizes the latter unsympathetically and unfairly), experimental theorists and practitioners (Gordon Craig and Meyerhold), and foreign directors (especially Kozintsev and Kurosawa).

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Collick tests his approach to Shakespearean films by focusing on separate subjects in each of the four sections of the book. In Part One he defends British Shakespearean films of the silent era from the common criticism that they are laughably crude and uncinematic. His argument is not that these films are neglected masterpieces but rather that they can only be properly understood in the context of the Victorian stage conventions that preceded them rather than the codes of classical film-making that followed them. Victorian melodrama, emphasis on "glorious patriotic spectacles" (p. 47), and use of tableaux combined to help establish a quintessentially British "high style" shared by the early films of Beerbohm Tree and the later adaptations of Laurence Olivier and the BBC Shakespeare series. Collick tends to race quickly from the history of nineteenth-century stage licensing acts through the transformation of melodrama from a radical to a regressive genre to the concluding judgment that productions by Olivier and the BBC show British culture in retreat, but he convincingly argues that the early Shakespearean films are interesting cultural artifacts linking the Victorians and the moderns.

In Part Two, Collick turns from cinema of spectacle to what is at least superficially a more radical cinema of symbolism, but in surveying experimental drama and film of the early twentieth century he betrays a deep-seated ambivalence. Non-representational staging, expressionist light, and symbolist interpretations of dramatic reality can have a liberating effect in staging and filming Shakespeare by undermining the priority of the verbal text, but such innovations also tend to drift toward mysticism and "erratic and irresponsible bohemianism" (p. 79). Collick is particularly disturbed by how easily the "new stagecraft" can be turned to the uses of advanced capitalism, a tale illustrated in his analysis of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1935). Despite—or perhaps because of—Max Reinhardt's "symbolist" direction, the lavish Warner Brothers' production becomes "a celebration of corporate wealth" (p. 92) and a fantasy of how industrial-technological society integrates even quirky and critical imaginative artists within it. Collick seems charmed by this film, perhaps because it suits his thesis so well, but he is noticeably impatient with his next example of a stylistically innovative Shakespearean film, Welles's *Othello* (1955), which he interprets as a politically reactionary plunge into a "chaotic, absurdist and uncontrollable world" (p. 96). This part of the book concludes with an expression of qualified respect for Derek Jarman's playful and transgressive film of *The Tempest* (1979), but it is difficult to avoid the suspicion that Collick's cultural materialism, like the early- to mid-century Marxism that is one of its forbears, is categorically unsympathetic to theatrical and cinematic modernism.

The last half of the book is in many respects the most interesting, taken up with Collick's provocative examination of "the theoretical challenge posed by a Shakespeare film made in a foreign language" (p. 5). Part Three emphasizes that the most useful interpretive context for Kozintsev's *Hamlet* (1963) and *King Lear* (1969) is not British Renaissance history and stagecraft but the Russian Revolution, Stalin, and Bakhtin. Collick's 20-page summary of Russian history and art from the nineteenth to the twentieth century is sketchy and selective, but nicely grounds Kozintsev's films in contemporary rather than archaic political and artistic crises. Collick means to deliver a humbling blow to Anglocentric critics by concluding that the Russian *Hamlet* and *Lear* "are among the films that come closest to realising a radical reproduction of Shakespeare in the cinema" because they "attempt to evoke, above all, the symbolic effect of history and social change" (pp. 147, 129). The fact that Kozintsev's own comments on his films (especially in *King Lear: The Space of Tragedy*) reveal a much different set of concerns is worth noting, but does not completely undermine the relevance and interest of Collick's approach to these films.

Part Four shifts to a consideration of Shakespeare in Japan and the films of Kurosawa, which, ironically, are accorded high respect by Western critics but only as they are stripped of their own cultural heritage and "invest[ed] . . . with meanings that a Japanese audience would find baffling or ridiculous" (p. 9). Collick finds it particularly significant that when Kurosawa's version of *Macbeth,* titled *Kumonosu jo* (1957), was released in England, it was titled not *The Castle of the Spider's Web,* a literal translation, but *Throne of Blood,* a misleading label placing it in the category of a Hammer thriller. Without an understanding of Noh

theater and the subtle and distinctive characteristics of particular Japanese film genres expressing Japan's response to Westernization and modernization, discussed briefly but knowledgeably by Collick, Kurosawa's Shakespeare films remain inscrutable or subject to critical distortion.

Shakespeare, Cinema and Society provides a valuable corrective to traditional literature-based studies of Shakespeare and film, but its effect may be undermined by several recurrent stylistic and argumentative flaws. Collick has a penchant for overstatement and for dismissive commentary on artists whose political activities or beliefs do not measure up to his high standards. Less important, but still worth mentioning, the book is badly copy-edited, loosely written in places, and often idiosyncratically punctuated. More important and disturbing is that Shakespeare turns out to be the junior—even the silent—partner of the trio named in the title. As far as Collick is concerned, "Shakespeare" is not even a text directly confronted by a film-maker but rather a cross-cultural idol that becomes an originating impetus for films ultimately shaped more substantively by cinematic and ideological conventions than by the poetry and plots of a distant author. This is one of the few critical studies of Shakespeare that, if I recall correctly, *never* quotes from or refers directly to a passage from a play. It is one thing to assert the relative autonomy of a film by deconstructing a text, Collick's avowed and in some respects skillfully accomplished plan; but in a book at least partly on a literary subject, it is something quite different to abolish, avoid, or abandon textuality, a regrettable consequence of Collick's critical approach. SIDNEY GOTTLIEB

Borges In/and/On Film

Edited by Edgardo Cozarinsky, tr. by Gloria Waldman and Ronald Crist. New York: Lumen Books, 1988. $10.95.

I want to like a book I am reviewing. I realize that this is my prejudice: a negative review serves no one. But I can't like this book. Jorge-Luis Borges remains a fascinating writer and thinker, a master of many narratives, an essential bridge between Modernism and Postmodernism. What there is of Borges himself in this book derives from the few film reviews he wrote for the magazine *Sur,* mostly during the 1930s. The rest is "stretch" material to make a book-length manuscript: a long introduction by Cozarinsky, stretching to make connections between Borges and film, both in his writing and in his life; mentions made of Borges in film criticism from *Cahiers du Cinéma, Positif, Movie, Sight and Sound,* and elsewhere; and finally brief synopses of films scripted by Borges or adapted from Borges. All of these have little integrity or interest, except for the most adamant Borges-bibliophile. They aren't useful for readers interested in Borges's writing; they are even less useful for readers interested in film.

The Cozarinsky introduction is too self-congratulatory: "I think Borges might have been pleased by the idea of a book whose different editions do not coincide, either in title or in content." Borges apparently admitted in a 1935 preface to an edition of *History of Infamy* that his first exercises in fiction derived from the films of von Sternberg. There is some provocation here, but it's never fleshed out. We learn later in the book that the von Sternberg films Borges admired were the early films (*Underworld* and *Docks of New York*) and that he found the films von Sternberg did with Marlene Dietrich to be tiresome. Cozarinsky's exposition includes Borges's appreciation of verbal *mise-en-scène* in R. L. Stevenson, Henry James's alternating between "panorama" and "scene" and von Sternberg's "cinematic, ocular novels." Worse, Cozarinsky suggests that Borges's abhorrence of long novels predisposed him to short texts with isolated images, images which could then be connected by montage. This kind of logic is neither very useful nor very accurate. It's analogous to, say, picking any epiphany moment in Joyce or Woolf and treating that moment as close-up or looking at the asterisks in Donald Barthelme or Robert Coover and treating them as jump cuts.

The section entitled "Borges on Film" contains the Borges reviews, which are interesting from an historical standpoint, but perhaps too predictable. Borges called Chaplin's *City Lights* sentimental and liked it less than *The Gold Rush.* He liked *Morocco*

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The section entitled "Film on Borges" does interest me in a perverse way for the tracking of Borges mentions in film criticism. For example, he was mentioned in reviews of *Last Year at Marienbad.* Godard quotes from Borges in *Les Carabiniers* and *Alphaville.* And in 1970 Straub used Borges's essay "On Dubbing" to defend against his film *Othon* being dubbed into Italian.

Finally, we are given a listing of the various Borges film projects: a script he wrote for a film based on one of his short stories, which he finally detested, because the film, to be coherent, required added scenes and "necessary linearity."

For every film that Borges mentioned in his writing, this book provides a filmography. The filmographies run as long as the Borges reviews.

Borges, himself, wanted what he wrote on film to be forgotten. He appears to have provided very little cooperation in this book project, and in fact his spirit seems to have gone against it. I'm guessing again, but my surmise is that, were he alive, he might be embarrassed by this book at worst and neutrally amused at best. BILL VAN WERT

Shot/Countershot

Film Tradition and Women's Cinema

By Lucy Fischer. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989.

To do justice to Lucy Fischer's *Shot/Countershot: Film Tradition and Women's Cinema,* I must discuss it from two different perspectives. First, it is a valuable contribution to the developing literature about the imaging of women in mainstream cinema and about feminist filmmaking. The longer I've taught film studies, the more frustrated I feel about my inability to keep up with what's going on, not only with the new films being made, but with what respected colleagues are talking and writing about. Nowhere have I felt less sufficiently informed than with that body of theoretically inspired feminist writing and film-making so evident at academic conferences and in academic journals. Fischer's *Shot/Countershot* is therapy: it is equally useful as a primer/review of the field for those struggling to keep up, and as a textbook for graduate and undergraduate courses focusing on women and film.

Fischer's approach, as her title suggests, is what is becoming known as "intertextuality": "What I propose is that we examine women's art within the context of works by men . . . to envision it as engaged in an ongoing *intertextual debate*" (12) with the dominant (male) cinema. Each of the first nine chapters of *Shot/Countershot* juxtaposes a film or films directed by men with a film or films directed by women. Each pairing is designed to provoke an investigation of one or more aspects of the issue of gender as it functions within film history. In her introductory chapter, Fischer demonstrates her method, using the early film *Fatima* (1897), a one-shot record of the famous belly dancer, and Gunvor Nelson's *Take Off* (1973). Nelson's remarkably conceived (and remarkably useful) film is discussed as a critique of *Fatima,* or at least of the gender ideology it embodies. When the stripper in *Take Off* removes not just her clothes, but her wig, her arms, her legs, her breasts, her head . . . and takes off into outer space, she is revealing the implications of the classic striptease and of all the films since *Fatima* in which a "striptease" by a female character functions as a climax in a conventional narrative.

Chapter 2 ("Mythic Discourse") juxtaposes Welles's *The Lady from Shanghai* (1946) and Mulvey and Wollen's *Riddles of the Sphinx;* Chapter 3 ("The Lives of Performers: The Actress as Signifier") juxtaposes Ingmar Bergman's *Persona* (1966) and Mai Zetterling's *The Girls* (1969); Chapter 4 ("Kiss Me Deadly: Heterosexual Romance") juxtaposes Max Ophuls's *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (1948) with Doris Dorrie's *Straight through the Heart* (1983) and Stephanie Beroes's *Recital* (1978); Chapter 5 ("Shall We Dance? Woman and the Musical") juxtaposes Busby Berkeley's *Dames*

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(1934) with Dorothy Arzner's *Dance, Girl, Dance* (1940), Kathy Rose's *Primitive Movers* and *Strange Ditties* (1983), and Chantal Akerman's *The Eighties* (1985); Chapter 6 ("Sisters: The Divided Self") juxtaposes several 1940s melodramas in which female identical twins are the focus, with Mulvey and Wollen's *The Bad Sister* (a 1983 video) and Margarethe von Trotta's *Sisters, or The Balance of Happiness* (1979); Chapter 7 ("Girl Groups: Female Friendship") juxtaposes George Cukor's *Rich and Famous* (1981) and Claudia Weill's *Girlfriends* (1978); Chapter 8 ("Women in Love: The Theme of Lesbianism") juxtaposes Lina Wertmüller's *Sotto, Sotto* (1984) and John Sayles's *Lianna* (1983); and Chapter 9 ("Murder, She Wrote: Women Who Kill") juxtaposes Claude Chabrol's *Violette* (1978) and Marleen Gorris's *A Question of Silence* (1981). *Shot/Countershot* concludes with an investigation of Yvonne Rainer's *The Man Who Envied Women* (1985), a film that not only confronts the explicit and implicit gender assumptions of the conventional cinema, but alludes to and recontextualizes a wide variety of male-directed films, from François Truffaut's and Blake Edwards's *The Man Who Loved Women* (1977, 1983) to Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), seen in Rainer's film as both an avant-garde attack on cinematic convention *and*—since it is, after all, a *woman's* eye that gets sliced at the beginning of the film and a *woman* molested in the "comic" rape sequence—a reconfirmation of the gender assumptions of mainstream cinema. Fischer sees Rainer's film as engaging in an intertextual process within itself.

Fischer's intertextual approach is never simplistic. Each member of each pair of films is analyzed in detail. Of course, some chapters are more impressive than others, but Fischer's discussions are consistently useful. While the majority of pairings juxtapose feminist films by women with problematic conventional films by men, in some instances (e.g., Chapter 8) a man's film is seen as more progressive than a woman's. And each chapter's investigation is embedded within a context of relevant theoretical and critical commentary, so that as readers proceed through the book, they review seminal films *and* seminal writing about film.

As with any critical approach that uses particular works as examples, readers are sure to imagine "better" pairings than those Fischer chose. I would have found a way of using Carolee Schneemann's *Fuses* (1967) and *Plumb Line* (1971) in the chapter on heterosexual romance, and Su Friedrich's *Damned If You Don't* (1987) in the chapter on lesbianism. And I might have included a chapter or two on documentary, perhaps on ethnographic film in particular, juxtaposing "male" films such as Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* (1922) and Timothy Asch and Napoleon Chagnon's *Ax Fight* (1975) with Trinh T. Minh-ha's *Reassemblage* (1982). Further, as extensive as the geographic area covered in Fischer's ten chapters is, her choice of

And Now, This (Aaarrrghhhh!)

You may have the comfortable feeling that going to the movies is a sure way to enjoy entertainment without being subjected to commercials. Well, your happy refuge is being invaded. The United Artists theater chain, seeking ever higher profits, has been experimenting with commercials at 2700 of its theaters—initially only advertising items sold at its snack bars, since moviegoers howled regular commercials off the screens when they were first tried six years ago. (The Disney Company, mindful of customer sentiments, has sworn off them publicly.)

I think we should stand on principle here: if theaters want to show us commercials, and still keep us from retreating to the home screen, they should offer the films *free*. Or at least establish a reduced-ticket section of their multiplexes in which those who don't mind watching commercials could save a few bucks, while those who want to see movies without annoyance and distraction could pay normal prices.

The United Artists genius in charge of all this is a senior vice president of marketing named Steve Flinn, whose address is 2545 Hempstead Turnpike, East Meadow, NY 11554. He has allowed to journalists that he doesn't believe anybody cares, because he's only received a few letters. Maybe he would pay more attention to picket lines? But letters couldn't hurt. E. C.

films is entirely limited to North America and Europe. The value of Fischer's approach, however, is its flexibility: the possibilities for exciting intertextual juxtapositions of films from all over the world are nearly endless.

The second perspective necessary for understanding the contribution of *Shot/Countershot* has to do with the breadth of film practice the volume explores. Fischer's strength as a film commentator has always been her breadth of interest. She has written valuable articles on early cinema (see "The Lady Vanishes" in John L. Fell, *Film before Griffith* (Berkeley: University of California, 1983), pp. 339–354), and on American avant-garde film (on particular film-makers such as Kenneth Anger and Hollis Frampton, and on the field in general (see her catalogue essay for the Museum of Modern Art's rental catalogue); and as is evident in *Shot/Countershot,* she writes with authority on American and European feature narrative. More effectively than her book's most notable predecessor, E. Ann Kaplan's *Women and Film* (New York: Methuen, 1983)—a volume in which Fischer's intertextual approach is implicit: Kaplan begins with traditional cinema, then, chapter by chapter, moves toward the feminist counterattack on the conventional—Fischer recognizes the value of using the immense tradition of avant-garde film as an ongoing critique of mass audience cinema. Too often, those who have polemicized about the gender, and other, limitations of conventional film have failed to recognize the full potential of alternative cinema, and—in teaching and exhibition situations—have limited their attacks on convention to the written word, implicitly supporting mainstream cinema by renting only, or primarily, conventional films. Though *Shot/Countershot* does not do as much with alternative cinema as I'd like to see, it is exemplary in its recognition that these other filmic options exist and should be taken into account, both on the basis of their own accomplishments and for what they reveal about more familiar filmic approaches.

As much as I admire Fischer's newest contribution to film studies literature, however, I must make a complaint. While Fischer's citation of previous theoretical, historical, and critical publications is exemplary, like most film scholars (and most scholarly journals), she offers readers no assistance in locating the films she discusses. In her introduction to the appendix of additional films and topics for teaching that follows Chapter 10, she explains, "I have not provided rental information for the titles mentioned because it changes so frequently and varies for the United States and Europe. Also, the proliferation of videotape in recent years has meant that schools can frequently more economically purchase (than rent) particular films." In my view, this explanation isn't sufficient, although Fischer's recognition that an explanation is in order is heartening. The details of the publication of books and articles are also continually changing, as new editions of books are released and articles are reprinted here and abroad. Like most current film scholarship, Fischer's book continues implicitly to privilege written critique over cinematic critique in a manner that is inconsistent with her approach. It's time that readers of writing about cinema are offered equally easy access to the primary subjects of written commentary, especially about films that are not widely available. Surely the fact that *A Question of Silence* remains unavailable in the United States, at least for 16mm rental, is necessary information for a reader interested in Fischer's discussion of the film—and, indeed, relevant to the general issue of women's cinema and to the subject of "silence" addressed in Gorris's film.

SCOTT MACDONALD

Returning to the Scene

Blake Edwards, Volume 2

By William Luhr and Peter Lehman. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1989. $14.95 paper, $29.95 cloth.

This is the second book William Luhr and Peter Lehman have published on Blake Edwards, a director whose work they value for what they argue is its "complex departures from many norms and conventions" of both classical and contemporary film practices. Their first volume, published in 1981, covered Edwards's films through his great critical and commercial success *"10"* (1979) and accurately predicted the emphasis on sexuality

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that would color Edwards's work in the 1980s, which is covered here.

The scene Edwards returns to, in the book's clever title, are the scene(s) of earlier films Edwards has returned to make, and remake, throughout the past decade. Three of his films of the decade are remakes, at least in part, of other peoples' films; two of them rework his own "Inspector Clouseau" series of the 1960s and '70s, and were made after his star, Peter Sellers, had died. Unlike most reviewers, who found in Edwards's recent films an impoverished raking over of old ideas, Luhr and Lehman see in them a wealth of creative invention, a series of "startling and inventive shifts" from Hollywood norms, most particularly in Edwards's several reworkings of the theme of male sexual compulsivity first foregrounded in *"10."*

Luhr and Lehman are very aware of how psychoanalysis is privileged in Edwards's work (Edwards has even used his own therapist as an actor and screenwriter), and share Edwards's enthusiasm for it. Their writing—*auteur* criticism at its close-reading best—is heavily informed by a feminist-inflected psychoanalytical approach. (A return to the primal scene?) Aware as they are of the need to carefully contextualize Edwards in the context of 1980s Hollywood, the authors show how a film like *Victor/Victoria* questions gender construction but never risks actively disturbing the intended mass audience. That the film ultimately reaffirms a traditional role for the Julie Andrews character is less important, for Luhr and Lehman, than the critique of "normal" sexuality it contains.

I am impressed but not completely persuaded by the authors' arguments. Or to put it bluntly, granting Edwards his virtuosity, why then don't I like the movies very much? This is partly a matter of taste. If nothing else, the authors and I seem to have radically different senses of humor; they recall a scene of an old lady farting in *"10"* as "hilarious" while I found it excruciatingly embarrassing. Edwards's mix, in varying portions from film to film, of the broadest slapstick and of very solemnly presented clinical material, does not appeal; a film like *The Man Who Loved Women* seems divided against itself rather than a unified statement—as Luhr and Lehman admit. To them, however, the "irresolution" of that film, or of *Micki & Maude,* or of others in the Edwards *oeuvre,* comprises a "playful" pushing against the limits of classical closure, rather than a throwing of one's hands in the air—or, as I would suggest, comprising a case of Edwards wanting to have his chauvinist cake and get points as a feminist too. In their construction of Edwards as something of a feminist, the authors downplay the sexism of many of his gags and situations. The authors gloss over, for example, *The Man Who Loved Women*'s appalling final voiceover, Julie Andrews's tribute to a man who shaped the women he loved like clay. But they are at least aware of the issues, and are light years ahead of most discussions of the role of sex in popular cinema.

Luhr and Lehman also failed to persuade me that Edwards's recycling of material is an especially meaningful commentary on Hollywood conventions. Luhr and Lehman devote half their book to the Clouseau series, making a convincing case that Peter Sellers's bumbling detective was in his way a representative male of the late twentieth century. But the two post-Sellers films, as theoretically interesting as Luhr and Lehman make them sound as commentaries on "the recording nature of cinema," remain excruciating viewing. If they are right, there is one metacinema I didn't like, and *Curse of the Pink Panther* was it.

Whatever its faults, *Returning to the Scene* benefits enormously from the authors' close, careful reading of Edwards's work. No one could have done a better job at explicating a rationale for them. Someone someday will have to analyze Edwards's use of space more extensively than Luhr and Lehman do here—their reading is more thematic than formal, not that Luhr and Lehman completely ignore this aspect of Edwards's craft. His inventive use of framing and screen space, including off-screen space, deserves a chapter of its own, for even the worst of Edwards's films contain hilarious sight gags made so by his formal flair. While I am not persuaded that the series of remakes Edwards has done of his own and others' work amounts to the radical rethinking of, and possible alternatives to, current film-making practices that Luhr and Lehman call for, I am inclined to give Luhr and Lehman, like Edwards, the benefit of the doubt, and catch the inevitable next Edwards sex comedy with a more open mind.

GREGG RICKMAN

German Film and Literature

Adaptations and Transformations

Edited by Eric Rentschler. New York: Methuen, 1988.

Literature has always enjoyed an especially important place in German film history. As the tabernacle of the nation's *Kultur,* it has been variously adapted and usurped, from the *Kinodebatte* of the teens (in which literary intellectuals argued over the threat and promise of cinema) to the appropriation of the literary heritage by the films of the Third Reich to the symbiotic relation between the classics and the state-subsidized New German Cinema. Questions about adaptation in German film have always been wrapped up with issues of legitimacy, national identity, and the difficult relationship between word and image. This strong collection of essays serves as both an important reference work for German film studies and a challenge to and model for any future adaptation analyses.

Rentschler groups the essays around what have become the standard periods of German film history: early (1913–17), classical (1918–32), Third Reich (1933–45), postwar (1945–61), and New German Cinema (1962–85). Presented chronologically, the essays provide a coherent view of German cinema. Their coverage is not exhaustive, but the collection tries to be representative, with three essays devoted to East German cinema and one to German emigrés. Of the 20 essays (most commissioned especially for this book), nine are devoted to New German Cinema, a weighting that reflects Rentschler's interests, but also the present concerns and state of German film studies. In fact, the list of contributors reads like a who's who of German film scholars in America, most of whom have written about New German Cinema at some point: Timothy Corrigan (*New German Film: The Displaced Image, Werner Herzog*), Thomas Elsaesser (*New German Cinema* and more articles than we would care to count), Miriam Hansen (numerous articles on Alexander Kluge), Jan-Christopher Horak, Anton Kaes, Gertrud Koch, Heide Schlüpmann, and Marc Silberman, just to count some of the more recognizable names in the field.

The project of this collection is to investigate "the historical interactions between German film and literature" (1) and thereby ask "why do artists adapt certain material at certain times?" (4). By placing film and literature in historical context, these authors hope to acknowledge the intertextuality of cinema, expanding "the field of adaptation study so as to include sociological, theoretical and historical dimensions" (5) rather than relying on narrow formal comparisons and questions of "fidelity."

While some of the essays are more successful at accomplishing these goals than others, as a whole the anthology presents a variety of approaches to adaptation study. Many follow a more or less established procedure for fidelity analysis—here's the book, here's the film, see the difference?—but none fall back onto a simplistic hierarchy of original over adaptation. There are no allusions to "betrayal" or "infidelity" in this book. However, a comparison between two texts is usually the starting point for these essays, even if the explanations for the transformations vary. Marc Silberman, for instance, presents a standard, yet thorough and clear analysis of the 1937 adaptation of Kleist's *The Broken Jug.* His discussion remains close to each text, focusing on their formal features in order to show how the significant differences reflect National Socialist ideology. Silverman refers to the context of actor Emil Jannings, director Gustav Ucicky, and Joseph Goebbels, but the force of his argument relies on exposing narrative and thematic deviations.

Other essays will place a different emphasis on the relation between original and adaptation. Rentschler's own essay on Volker Schlöndorff's *Young Törless,* for example, will use this reworking of Robert Musil's 1906 novel as a "pre-text" for an analysis of the film that focuses on its specifically cinematic properties in order to show how it comments on the dynamics of dominant cinema and German history.

These different emphases lead inevitably to a broader definition of adaptation, one that includes, as Rentschler says in the introduction, "a dialogue with tradition, a reworking of certain modes of expression, a play with various cultural givens" (3). This allows Rentschler to include Schlüpmann's essay on *The Student of Prague,* which argues that

even though it was based on an original scenario, the film "adapted" many elements of Romanticism. Ann Kaplan starts with a line from a Brecht poem to show how Helma Sanders-Brahm's *Germany, Pale Mother* pays homage to a German poetic tradition in its portrayal of mother-daughter relationships. And Anton Kaes discusses how Fassbinder's *The Marriage of Maria Braun,* also based on an original screenplay, reworks German history and collective memory through film.

The broader definition of adaptation encourages an impressive array of methodologies, ranging from psychoanalysis (Judith Mayne's interesting essay on *Nosferatu* and *Dracula,* Elsaesser on *Pandora's Box*) to authorship (Gertrud Koch on von Sternberg's *Blue Angel*). Historical context is most important to these authors, however, and the best essays emphasize the extent to which the texts are embedded in their time. Jan-Christopher Horak (who should receive a special nod for his excellent translations of two of the essays in the anthology) shows how Georg Klaren's 1947 DEFA production of Buchner's *Wozzeck* adapts and transforms literary and cinematic traditions, at the same time reestablishing ties to those traditions in response to postwar ideological and social needs. A model of clarity and scholarship, it is representative of many of the excellent essays in this collection.

With an outstanding set of appendices, bibliographical references at the end of each essay and the book itself, and distribution information, this will surely be an important and useful text. But its intelligent approach to its topic makes it essential reading for anyone interested in German film and adaptation. SCOTT CURTIS

The "I" of the Camera

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William Rothman has drawn this collection of his essays from previously unpublished conference papers and prior publications in film and humanities journals. A few of the entries were written expressly for this volume. The collection is an eclectic one in which Rothman attempts to explore selected aspects of film history and questions of authorship. The historical pieces discuss cultural patterning within classical Hollywood cinema, e.g., the "Americanness" of American film, the birth of the movies, and Griffith's legacy for American film-makers. Authorship is explored with reference to Chaplin's intended meanings in the final sequence of *City Lights,* Hawks's adaptation of Hemingway's *To Have and Have Not,* Renoir's affinity with his character Octave in *The Rules of the Game,* and Hitchcock's presentation of women in *Vertigo* and *North by Northwest.*

Rothman's account of the film author is a curious one. He locates directorial authorship in privileged shots or camera movements where he feels the director drops his or her "mask" and speaks directly to the viewer, rather than through the mediations of character or narrative structure. Rothman's search for an author is a search for those moments where Hitchcock or Chaplin most directly identify with the camera, where its view becomes their view. Authorship, in this account, leaves its visible trace within a film and reduces, ultimately, to biography. Hitchcock's camera becomes Hitchcock, Chaplin's camera becomes Chaplin. These discussions of authorship are uncomplicated by studio politics and norms, the collaborative nature of film production, or the vicissitudes of history or ideology to which individuals are subject. Such variables do not enter into Rothman's accounts, nor does he fully acknowledge that authorship is today a theoretically problematic category. The analyses rest upon his assertions that, in a given shot, the camera is more fully "Hitchcockian," in a personal and biographical way, than at other moments.

Rothman's discussions of authorship and early American film history proceed as if these matters have not been discussed by other film scholars. The essays on authorship, for example, implicitly focus on issues of power, spectatorship, and the construction of subjectivity in the work of Griffith, Hitchcock, et al., yet he does not acknowledge the lively concerns and controversies of contemporary theory in these areas. There are virtually no references to

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the work of researchers exploring similar problems, and one does not know whether this results from a lack of familiarity or a willful disregard for contemporary film scholarship.

A number of the essays are up to 15 years old, and these have not been updated in light of recent developments in theory and method. This is especially unfortunate given Rothman's stated interests in history. One who writes about the birth of the movies without incorporating the findings of recent film historians is treading on eggshells. As one of the most rigorous and specialized areas within our field, film history is no longer a province for the generalist. Yet what Rothman offers in his survey of early American film are the generalizations typical of the older histories, as if the findings of recent historians have not altered in fundamental ways our understanding of the early film industry. For example, Rothman observes that after World War I, "the American film industry grew to international dominance," but doesn't discuss why or how. We also learn that, following the growth of nickelodeons, "the theatrical narrative . . . became the dominant form of film in America, as it has remained to this day." Robert Allen and Janet Staiger, among others, have noted the connections between the development of film narrative and economic needs for production stabilization. Rothman passes over these and other considerations. Lacking an empirical basis for the film history he constructs, he relies on terms like "mystery." He announces, for example, that the development of film narratives remains "rather mysterious."

Rothman seems to be constructing a phenomenological criticism (though the volume does not have a substantive account of his theories or method), and he finds lots of mysteries. He remarks upon "film's mysterious history," and discusses film's "mysterious hold" on its viewers, its "mysterious powers," the "mysterious relationships" between the camera and the viewer, the "mysterious depths" of the medium, and the "mysterious views" of a given shot. As a medium, film is in touch with the "mystery" of human communication: "*The "I" of the Camera* takes this mystery to be, historically, one of the central themes of film." As these passages may indicate, Rothman's film criticism frequently identifies cinema with the ineffable. He develops a transcendental conception of the self in place of the historically and ideologically constituted subject of current theory, and he implies that this is intended as a corrective to accounts which fail to appreciate the importance of the "mystery" of film. We learn, for example, that Griffith's Biograph films intended "to tap the awesome power of film in the hope of saving souls." In *True Heart Susie,* "Griffith discovers a deep inner connection between the mysteries of creation, forgiveness, and love and the mystery at the heart of film." Chaplin uses film in a "quest to become more fully human."

While he links the experience of cinema with ineffable qualities, Rothman also personalizes, demonizes, the camera to a remarkable degree. One of his recurring themes, which he treated in his previous work *Hitchcock—The Murderous Gaze,* is that cinema manifests dark, murderous impulses (not that it arouses these in a viewer, but that the medium itself contains such impulses). When the camera presents a villain to us in close-up, the camera is tainted by its representation. When Hitchcock gives us a close-up of the professor's missing finger in *The 39 Steps,* "the camera is revealed at this moment as an instrument of villainy." "The camera can 'nominate' a villain only by nominating itself. The camera becomes evil's only real exemplar." How this transference from villain to camera occurs remains unclear, and it is developed without reference to the abundant work on spectator positioning.

Rothman describes his method as a close formal reading of film sequences, but the scrutiny is highly selective. For Rothman, the camera is the primary, if not the only, element of film form. He does not discuss the rhythms of editing, depth of field, diegetic and nondiegetic sound, or the normative coding of form by genre or studio. Instead, the camera is singled out and invested with powers as if it were a person, and it goes about subjecting a film's characters to those powers. Thus, characters can be forced to "bear the burden of the camera's gaze." Occasionally, taking pity on the characters if they show their "capacity to endure its gaze, the camera humanely withdraws." If characters are angry, "the camera has the calm assurance to wait the storm out." This perspective lends a certain

sameness to all of the essays. Whether the director be Chaplin, Renoir, Hitchcock, or Griffith, Rothman writes about moments where characters "acknowledge" the camera, where the directors "acknowledge" the camera, where the camera "acknowledges" the character. The analyses not infrequently appear circular: "To know a film's impact, we have to know the film objectively. To know a film objectively, we have to know the hold it has on us. To know the hold a film has on us, we have to know ourselves objectively. And to know ourselves objectively we have to know the impact of the films in our lives."

One finishes this book wishing for greater clarity and control in the writing and wondering what it all adds up to. Rothman's core reflections on the role of national culture in film history and the camera's mediation of film authorship are developed obliquely and are scattered across the essays. The collection would benefit greatly from an additional essay where Rothman clearly explicates and sums up the theoretical portrait of the medium he is creating, where he acknowledges the problematic nature of film authorship, and where he offers a defense, or at least a justification, for the heuristic value of "the mysterious" in our understanding of cinema. STEPHEN PRINCE

Hitchcock's Films Revisited

By Robin Wood. New York: Columbia University Press, 1989. $35.00

Robin Wood's critical career is fascinating. A sixties article on *Psycho* was rejected by Penelope Houston at *Sight and Sound,* then taken by Eric Rohmer at *Cahiers du Cinéma.* Wood wrote auteur studies on Hitchcock, Bergman, Hawks, Penn, and Chabrol. *Hitchcock's Films* (1965) is dedicated to Wood's wife. *Hitchcock's Films Revisited* thanks Arthur Lippe, with whom Wood has lived for twelve years. Once an unregenerate humanist in the view of a *Screen* editor, Wood presently describes himself as a Marxist, a feminist, and an advocate for gay liberation.

Considering a body of his work that continued throughout, one might expect that a collection such as the present volume, spanning 25 tumultuous years, might read like an anthology, diplomatically selected by an editor to encompass divergent views. Either that or revision from a revisionist. In fact, neither alternative proves true. Wood cites W. H. Auden as an example to be shunned; change-of-heart led Auden the Christian to rewrite poems by Auden the Communist. Wood has the integrity to live with his past, an attribute which hardly burdens all of film study.

In consequence, the text of *Hitchcock's Films* appears here in its entirety, qualified only by introductory materials, a 1977 retrospective, and endnotes. (Don't discard your old copy; this one lacks the filmography. Its bibliography, while larger, differs. The stills illustrate new, rather than earlier, points.) Following the reprint, Wood adds new material, mostly republished from journals, which examines the British films (previously neglected), the Ingrid Bergman movies, and *Shadow of a Doubt.* Titles define other entries: "Plot Formations," "The Murderous Gays: Hitchcock's Homophobia," "Male Desire, Male Anxiety: The Essential Hitchcock."

Whatever vintage, Wood's writing is marked by a generosity of vision that takes several turns. As a scholar he seems almost eager to acknowledge any previous text even touching on his own interpretations, yet Wood's strategy turns combative toward alternative Hitchcock studies that seem to him reductive. The latter include dismissals of directorial authority (Modleski), "pop" psychologizing (Spoto), and the male gaze (Mulvey, Renov). A deeper ire is triggered by theorists like Bellour and Heath, who reduce singular texts to bland sorts of classical narrativity. If Wood is sometimes a rejected feminist, he insists that males, at least male homosexuals, be allowed into the group. As a gay, he believes easy readings of Hitchcock as homophobic to be simplistic and inadequate. His Marxism, when it appears at all, seems a kind of polymorphous sexual utopia administrated by D. H. Lawrence.

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finally resist quantifying theory. It's the complexities, the tensions and strains that highlight irresolutions and contradictions in individuals, and by extension in society. Shifts in Wood's personal ideology are reflected in the character of contradictions that now stand foregrounded. In *Hitchcock's Films* a bourgeois family will teeter unsuspecting on the brink of chaos *(The Birds);* a smug innocent, thrust into the role of fugitive, suddenly realizes the precariousness of human order *(North by Northwest);* an injured man confuses spectatorship and personal life. Hitchcock imprisons us with him *(Rear Window).* In *Hitchcock's Films Revisited,* chaos becomes the stultifying restrictions of the nuclear family. The fugitive evolves as a character and learns to accept responsibilities. The wounded man is impotent and irresponsible. James Stewart's likely incompatibility with Grace Kelly is carried to its logical conclusion by Raymond Burr with his bedridden wife. What's admirable is what's subversive.

One of Wood's most interesting investigations is a study he terms "Plot Formations," overall patterns running across Hitchcock's full career in which the film stories are cast: the Guilty Woman, the Psychopath, Marriage. In some instances he finds variation (psychopaths may be doubles, may combine with False Accusation, may be central, may be not). Guilty women are always guilty. Marriages are usually problematical. Genre seems to dominate in *Under Capricorn* and *Mr. and Mrs. Smith.* As in "Ideology, Genre, Auteur," Wood is sensitive to generic stylizations. A daytime Santa Rosa gives way to night's *film noir* in *Shadow of a Doubt.* One sometimes wishes that Wood might extend such cross references beyond simple film comparisons. Genre plots really overlap like crazy. In Hitchcock, identical key scenes cross-trace too, quite independent of Wood's plot patterns. Traditions of theatrical melodrama must not have been unknown to Hitchcock. Green, for instance, was a nineteenth-century cue to the supernatural. (Green for Madeleine in *Vertigo*). And adaptations. The changes in Josephine Tey's *A Shilling for Candles* which resulted in *Young and Innocent* lay bare basic Hitchcock plot schemes: Save the big scenes. Shift love interest to the fugitive. Re-center point-of-view. Sift out social observation for a few humorous bits. JOHN FELL

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the expectable (college professors) to the novel (handicapped people and "the wise-cracking girl's best friend"). E. C.

Mhire, Herman, et al. *Robert Russett: A Retrospective Survey.* University Art Museum, University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, LS 70504. Luxurious catalog of an exhibition of Russett's film and video work, some of which uses Cajun material in visually obsessive ways radically different from Les Blank's. E. C.

Monty, Ib, et al. *Carl Th. Dreyer.* New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1989. $9.95 paper. Essays on Dreyer and his films, lovely illustrations, and a translation of his script for *Medea.* E. C.

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CHRISTOPHER SHARRETT

Naremore, James. *The Magic World of Orson Welles.* Rev. ed. College Station, TX: Southern Methodist University Press, 1989. $14.95 paper. Revision of the 1978 work (whose title, not of the author's choosing, belies the substantialness and scholarly precision of the book). Naremore has added a preface, in which he correctly notes that this is "the only book that tries to link a close analysis of [Welles's] style with a description of his politics and historical circumstances." He has also added a chapter taking advantage of Welles film fragments that have surfaced recently, and of materials newly available in the Welles archive in Bloomington, Indiana, which throw interesting light on the studio cutting that Welles's work was subjected to. E. C.

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Shoesmith, Brian, and Tom O'Regan, eds. *Asian Cinema.* A special issue of the journal *Continuum,* Div. of Humanities, Griffith Univ., Nathan, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia 4111. US$9.00. Essays and interviews about Indian and Chinese cinema, including documents gathered in China by Chris Berry that bear on the recent evolution of the industry. E. C.

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History

New German Cinema: A History

By Thomas Elsaesser. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989.

At a moment when film studies is rapidly splintering into a score of irreconcilable methodol-

the expectable (college professors) to the novel (handicapped people and "the wise-cracking girl's best friend"). E. C.

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At a moment when film studies is rapidly splintering into a score of irreconcilable methodol-

ogies, research programs, and intellectual creeds, the appearance of Elsaesser's accomplished study of the New German Cinema provides welcome evidence that sophisticated film scholarship need not march under a single banner. Deftly balancing accounts of industrial practices, formal innovations, generic conventions, political chronologies, and a theory of cinematic spectatorship, this is an unusually ambitious and comprehensive book. Elsaesser's learning is intimidatingly broad—German literature and history, the Frankfurt School, feminist theory, psychoanalysis, are but some of its provinces—and frequently yields striking interpretations of even the most familiar ground, while clearing away many cliches and distortions surrounding postwar film in the Federal Republic. *New German Cinema: A History* is, as its title suggests, a historical narrative, but the conspicuous absence of essentializing discourses or aesthetic teleologies in the book sharply differentiates it from many older approaches to film history. It appears at a time when researchers across the humanities are turning with renewed interest to forms of historical scholarship, and doubtless will play an important role in future theorizations of film history and national cinemas.

Beginning with a detailed overview of the postwar situation of German cinema, Elsaesser explores how the German film-makers navigated an impossible course between competition from Hollywood, hostility from commercial German producers, a precarious relation to television, inadequate and sometimes restrictive state funding, and a frequently indifferent film-going German public. For despite substantial international recognition, the New German Cinema of the 1970s consistently trailed behind Hollywood films at the box office; while in 1978, 400,000 spectators saw Hark Bohm's *Moritz lieber Moritz* and allowed it to reach Number 38 on the top-grossing film list, 4.6 million of their compatriots saw *Star Wars*.

Sometimes chastised for allegedly making films without an audience, Elsaesser argues that ". . . The German film-maker is 'other-directed' twice over: parallel to negotiating approval from committees and state bureaucracies, he or she must also woo a public. The search for an audience constitutes the other, less commented-on aspect of the cultural mode of production." (p. 42) If popular success was often elusive, he argues that the New German Cinema was on occasion remarkably succesful at communicating with specific audiences (women, workers, young people, political activists, gays) in a unique manner. "It would thus make sense to see the various styles of film-making and the different film forms which emerged in the German cinema less as distinct genres . . . and rather as so many modes of identification, distanciation, spectator-address, and discursiveness." (p. 61) This understanding of New German Cinema as a set of historically shifting positions for spectatorial identification and interpellation is central to Elsaesser's argument and leads him to posit a mode of spectator involvement which he calls the "cinema of experience." Reading films by Harun Farocki, Werner Schroeter, Ulrike Ottinger, Helke Sander, Ula Stöckl, and many of the women directors associated with the *Frauenfilm,* he explores the use of identificatory strategies which deny a secure position of knowledge and accommodate contradiction, in marked opposition to the "experience of cinema" he identifies with Wim Wenders, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Rudolf Thome, and a less mediated relation to Hollywood.

New German Cinema: A History offers a detailed analysis of the German system of film production, showing how concepts of film authorship and literary adaptation developed in response to changing economic pressures and cultural politics. Readers who have ever tried to make sense of the bewildering chronology of West German film subsidies will appreciate its lengthy treatment here, while perhaps agreeing with the author that "They will probably find certain points discussed at greater length than they had ever cared to consider them." (p. 2) At times the sheer volume of information in the book's narrative leads to repetition, and some readers might have wished for more sustained close analyses of individual films, particularly from a film scholar as adept at them as Elsaesser. One also regrets the absence of a single chapter more compactly treating the problem of identification, including recent scholarship on its theoretical underpinnings, an omission that (deliberately?) denies any section of the book dominant authority and sometimes seems to produce a textually divided reader with striking similarities to Elsaesser's ideal spectator of the "cinema of experience."

Reservations such as these matter little, how-

ever, for *New German Cinema: A History* remains a remarkably thorough and informative book. Many of its subjects (Alexander Kluge, Herbert Achternbusch, *Das kleine Fernsehspiel*) are still little-known outside of Germany and now receive their due in an English-language narrative that situates them outside reified categories of personality, genius, and national character and inside the contradictory spaces of politics, economics, history, and culture. It is still too early to predict how the likely prospect of a reunified Germany will determine the future of German film. The possibilities—joint East/West coproductions, a single national audience, and a ready supply of hopes, anxieties, and (un)mastered history as film material—suggest that the next thirty years of German cinema could well be as interesting as the last. If so, let us hope that they, too, will claim Thomas Elsaesser's attention.

EDWARD DIMENDBERG

Allegories of Cinema

American Film in the Sixties

By David James. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989.

David James's *Allegories of Cinema* is, or should be reckoned as, one of the most significant film books in recent years. At once a long overdue introductory survey of shockingly neglected films, and the definitive discussion of most of them, the book provides a necessary corrective both to the continued marginalization of non-theatrical film-making and the obfuscation of the 1960s in contemporary discourse generally. The book is a bold attempt, and a largely successful one, to link the various underground cinemas with independent film-making, structural films, the Art cinema, radical documentaries, feminist film-making and film theory, with an eye always on Hollywood just off-screen, as it were—tracing these varied movements both to the same general roots in the culture at large while placing them within the specificities of their particular genres and histories. At the same time, James manages to incorporate contemporary film theory and the multiplicities demanded by it, providing some of the clearest and most compelling discussions of the cinema's imbrication in cultural, economic, and production practices, along with modes of consumption and reception. He does not simply pay lip service to fashionable, superficial notions of the relations between film and history, between a historicized film history and film criticism. Rather he demonstrates "an understanding of the interdetermination of all practices in the total historical field of film production . . ." (5) He also manages to provide encapsulations of 60s politics with an astonishing economy—his bibliography is not only a testament to the care and concern that produced this tremendous book, but provides a good starting place for a political recapitulation of the era, while his book as a whole stands as the definitive cinematic analysis of it.

James, as is typical in this consummate work, precisely defines the terms he uses. Thus the sixties:

> Internationally it can be dated from de-Stalinization and the invasion of Hungary in 1956 . . . nationally it begins with the domestic thaw in the fear and apathy of the cold war years . . . and is marked by the Greensboro sit-ins and the formation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in the spring of 1960 and by the inauguration of President John Kennedy the same year. It concludes between 1973, when the withdrawal from Vietnam marked the first major political defeat for U.S. imperialism and prompted the demobilization of domestic resistance, and 1974, when the oil embargoes and OPEC's manipulation of oil prices ended the cheap energy that had fueled the generally steady expansion of the capitalist economies since their mutual integration in the postwar reconstruction.

James then goes on to invoke Watergate and Nixon's resignation as further bringing the 60s to a close. This periodization is important, for it will allow him to invoke a handful of film practices (including a type of film criticism) as being part and parcel of the 60s, whereas a different periodization,

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a different sense of what constitutes the 60s and what is more properly *post*-60s, can be envisioned —as I will attempt below.

The aim of the book is nothing less than a return to the 60s via the extraordinary life and vitality of various non-theatrical film practices. For James, these films were truly "populist," and they owe their thematic and technical concerns to the struggles of disenfranchised groups to redress political wrongs and shift social life. (22) The avant-gardes of the era and the radical documentaries of the period were enabled not simply by political movements, nor by a history of an Art cinema, but also by the decline and decay of the Hollywood industry. "The present argument has been that it was precisely the coincidence of the popularity of film and its crisis that made it available for popular intervention. The sixties alternative cinemas were built amid the ruins of an industry, but the unprecedented social maturity they brought to film was its autumnal ripeness. When we look back, it is not only to specific film practices that have been lost, but to an equally vanquished social presence for the medium as a whole." (348)

The operating metaphor of the book's title is explained by James in a manner indicative of the brilliance of the book, and the manner in which it continually sites its subjects within a coherent theoretical context: "Even as it encodes its own mode of production, every alternative film practice encodes its position in respect to the dominant mode of production . . . And the mode of production it manifests speaks of the social relations that constitute it, the social relations of the cinema of which it is, or would be, the film-vehicle. Every film is thus an allegory of a cinema." (12)

James's point of entry into these allegories of cinema is, significantly, authorship. Thus individual chapters are devoted to the works of a single film-maker (Stan Brakhage, Andy Warhol) while other chapters, such as that on "Underground Film" or "Pure Film," are subdivided by readings of the works of individuals who created within these modes (Jonas Mekas, Jordan Belson, the Kuchars, among others, in Underground film, for instance). James justifies this strategy not only because it is convenient, but further because "the concept did provide a ledge where the romantic, idealist panoply of expressive individualism was forced into confrontation with the materialist and the social, with the specific potentials and limits of film, and with the public operations of cinema." (28)

James, however, is not rigid in utilizing authorship as an organizing principle, and it is certainly not a totalizing principle in this densely argued text. Authorship as a structure of arrangement is entirely abandoned, appropriately enough, in the section entitled "Political Film/Radical Cinema" where the focus shifts from underground, experimental, personal film-making to radical documentaries about the Vietnam War, the peace movement, and Black Power. Many of these films were made by collectives in a rejection of the ideology of personality and of ownership, and James mirrors this political movement in his organization. In this chapter, further, he convincingly links the "blaxploitation" films of the early 70s with the Black Power movement of the 60s, and the short-lived but extremely exciting black independent features of the period, importantly invoking Melvin Van Peebles's *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasss Song*. James nevertheless notes how the blaxploitation films were still part and parcel of the bourgeois state (recognized as such at the time as well, which James himself points out).

The book is not error-free, and only in the spirit of scholarly exactitude do I offer these few caveats to errors that I was able to spot: *Easy Rider* was distributed not by Warner Bros. as James claims (17), but by Columbia, which was in something like a partnership with the BBS Co., Columbia experiencing tremendous financial difficulties and so turning to the youth film as a possible savior (*Head, Easy Rider, Five Easy Pieces*); Gordon Parks, director of *Shaft* and *Shaft's Big Score*, did not direct *Superfly* (as claimed in the text and the illustration on 189)—*Superfly* was directed by the late Gordon Parks, Jr., while the director of *Superfly T.N.T.* was not Ron Neale (189) but Ron O'Neal, the star of the series. But these are minor.

Not so minor is the problem of periodization. For in extending the 60s into the mid-70s James is able to invoke a film practice and a film theory-as-a-practice as being part and parcel of the period: feminism. Of course James is not naive or simplis-

tic. He recognizes that feminism historically followed earlier 60s movements; or, better, that the women's movement had been put on hold, repressed by the struggle for civil rights and, then, in the mobilizations to end the war in Vietnam; repressed, further, by the forces of sexism that often went hand in hand with Black Power and the counterculture. James notes that "along with the Gay Rights movement, the women's movement was the *last* of the mobilizations to be organized . . ." (305; emphasis orginal) He recognizes, however, that "American feminism only gained public prominence as a mass movement or a vanguard ideology as it discovered its difference from the left in general and separated itself strategically from other social movements." (305) Yet James continues to insist on the correspondence between feminism and the 60s by linking feminist film theory directly with the women's movement of the late 60s, and, in turn, linking these with the growth of academic film theory, especially feminist theory.

We must recognize, however, that in the truest sense the 60s had come to an end before the middle 70s—the 60s precisely that had given rise to the filmic practices and politics that James has previously discussed. I would insist that the demobilization of domestic resistance to the Vietnam War, which dissipated the counterculture as a whole, occurred a year or two *before* US troops were withdrawn from Vietnam in 1973—resistance to the war ended when the draft was effectively halted in 1971, just as resistance had increased tremendously a few years earlier with the revocation of student deferments making more middle-class young men eligible for service in Vietnam. James's extension of the sixties into 1973–75 allows him to claim that a radical cinema was taken up by a radical cinematic *theory,* the theory of feminism: "While resistance seeped away from almost all art practices, American criticism was meeting French post-structuralism, itself after 1968 putatively the displacement of a social program. As film studies intersected with feminism —the only radical discourse tolerated in the academy—theory appeared to itself as the chief surviving arena of dissent, the main site of negation. With the decline of both radical and structural film after the early seventies, theory became the best part of cinema, and the best part of theory was feminist." (309)

There are too many moves in this section, too much slippage here—the "putative" displacement of political activism; why precisely *is* feminism the only radicalism tolerated in academia? etc. One gets the sense that James's invocation of feminism and feminist film theory is a bit over-determined. Perhaps he feels that having invoked auteurism as a structural principle, and having discussed virtually all male film-makers, he has reproduced 60s sexism, that in historically recalling the era he has also reproduced its negative tendencies as well. In this penultimate section perhaps he wishes to redress both the era's failures and his own imagined reproduction of them. He even attempts to claim that "Brakhage and the homosexual ironists—Warhol, Smith, the Kuchars, and Anger . . . could logically be recognized as latently feminist." (313)

More significantly, James has failed to see how in the very decline of radical film-making, the structural film-makers emerged as predominate—an inward, formalist movement away from the overt social and political engagement of the radical films, or even of Warhol's attacks on bourgeois art and sexuality; and how feminist theory follows diachronically upon this trend; that feminism emerged both as a *reaction* to the 60s (cf. Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967 -1975*) and as an outgrowth of this 70s inward turn. The failure of the 60s to sustain a mass countercultural movement provoked the 70s self-concerns (the "Me generation" and the "Minimal Self"). Feminism, arising at this historical moment, initially shifted the ground of radical discourse from outer to inner, from Marx to Freud, from the political to the personal. Only later did feminism, and, by extension, feminist film theory, return to the more global issues that the 60s had raised.

In James's own chapter on feminism and feminist film theory he points implicitly to the very model I have broadly sketched, in moving his discussion from Maya Deren to Carolee Schneemann, and then to the feminist documentary, to Yvonne Rainer and finally, to *Deep Throat*(!). "Figuring an obdurate contraction of social aspiration and substituting the spectacle of mutual prostitution for the renovation of the body politic . . . contemporary pornography entails a retreat from the political that mirrors in reverse the utopian explosion of popular participation in the political that characterized

the sixties." (346) The works of Schneemann and Rainer, of course, are hardly pornographic, but that they owe some of their roots to the retreat from the overt global engatements of the 60s is what enabled pornography to co-opt the political intentions of their films, at the same time the social shift to self-gratification enabled pornography to enter respectable society (the popular success of *Deep Throat*), and, following that, the academy (cf. Linda Williams, *Hard Core*). This is hardly the forum to argue the precise periodization of the 60s, nor the historical roots of the contemporary feminist project and its apotheosis in academic film theory. James's inclusion of feminist film theory within this book, in fact, makes the work more valuable as a whole, if slightly more problematic as a compleat representation of the 60s.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the publisher of James's crucial work, Princeton University Press. They are to be congratulated for their willingness to publish a work on relatively obscure films; to publish a work of tremendous intellectual density and complexity in an oversize, lengthy format replete with hundreds of stills, the vast majority of them superbly reproduced. James has been well served here, just as he has served the film community well with this massively impressive regeneration of the films and politics of the sixties.

DAVID DESSSER

American Film Melodrama

Griffith, Vidor, Minnelli

By Robert Lang. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989. $39.95 cloth, $12.95 paper.

Any book on US film melodrama that shuns both theater history and Douglas Sirk is clearly striking out on new paths. A close reading of nine features by the three directors of the title makes up the guts of this sophisticated study (a revision, presumably, of the author's identically titled 1986 Columbia University dissertation). Focusing on the family side of melodrama via post-Freudian theorists, film melodrama is understood as a struggle against (or accommodation to) patriarchy—and not simply as a synonym for the "woman's film." Some of Lang's keenest observations come in dissecting the underreported male protagonists of the family drama—in Vidor's *The Crowd* and Minnelli's *Some Came Running* and *Home from the Hill.*

The psychoanalytic thesis, tying Hollywood's family way with Freud's Oedipal masterplot, is not too insistently plugged (though Martha Hyer's tightly rolled hair in *Some Came Running* is "like a phallus pinned closely to her"), and the vantage makes sharp sense of the various hysterias in Griffith's *Way Down East* (as a parable of patriarchy restored), Vidor's *Ruby Gentry* (in which Ruby contests for the sexual power, for all the good it does her), and *Some Came Running* (as an elaborate tale of loss of faith in the father). If other of the essays are less inspired, they are not without pleasures: *Broken Blossoms* is seen to offer "fetishism over sadism, which is no real progress." The three directors fit with surprisingly little distortion into a schema under which Griffith reinforces patriarchy through theological terms, Vidor examines patriarchal society through physical and economic terms, while Minnelli ironizes over it through more purely psycho-sexual ones.

If Lang's application of literary and psychoanalytic theory is wide-ranging and solid, his ventures into film history lead to confusion between melodrama as a critical tool and as an industry practice. An odd use of the American Film Institute Catalog statistics for features of the 1920s leads him to conclude that "almost every film was understood at the time to be a melodrama." The reverse would be closer to the truth. From the time of Griffith's Biographs onwards, the film industry has understood and promoted melodramas as everything *but* melodrama, a word they (and the audience) shunned as meaning "failed drama" or, at best, old-fashioned drama. In a sense, this book simply gets caught in the confusion over which films now should be included in the rapidly expanding boundaries of "melodrama," as the topic has lost its lowbrow stigma and found fashionableness in film studies over the last twenty years (especially since Thomas Elsaesser's 1972 "Tales of Sound and Fury"). Thus while Lang sorts out distinctions between tragedy and melodrama, it is less evident how his subject might be delimited from drama it-

the sixties." (346) The works of Schneemann and Rainer, of course, are hardly pornographic, but that they owe some of their roots to the retreat from the overt global engatements of the 60s is what enabled pornography to co-opt the political intentions of their films, at the same time the social shift to self-gratification enabled pornography to enter respectable society (the popular success of *Deep Throat*), and, following that, the academy (cf. Linda Williams, *Hard Core*). This is hardly the forum to argue the precise periodization of the 60s, nor the historical roots of the contemporary feminist project and its apotheosis in academic film theory. James's inclusion of feminist film theory within this book, in fact, makes the work more valuable as a whole, if slightly more problematic as a compleat representation of the 60s.

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Griffith, Vidor, Minnelli

By Robert Lang. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989. $39.95 cloth, $12.95 paper.

Any book on US film melodrama that shuns both theater history and Douglas Sirk is clearly striking out on new paths. A close reading of nine features by the three directors of the title makes up the guts of this sophisticated study (a revision, presumably, of the author's identically titled 1986 Columbia University dissertation). Focusing on the family side of melodrama via post-Freudian theorists, film melodrama is understood as a struggle against (or accommodation to) patriarchy—and not simply as a synonym for the "woman's film." Some of Lang's keenest observations come in dissecting the underreported male protagonists of the family drama—in Vidor's *The Crowd* and Minnelli's *Some Came Running* and *Home from the Hill.*

The psychoanalytic thesis, tying Hollywood's family way with Freud's Oedipal masterplot, is not too insistently plugged (though Martha Hyer's tightly rolled hair in *Some Came Running* is "like a phallus pinned closely to her"), and the vantage makes sharp sense of the various hysterias in Griffith's *Way Down East* (as a parable of patriarchy restored), Vidor's *Ruby Gentry* (in which Ruby contests for the sexual power, for all the good it does her), and *Some Came Running* (as an elaborate tale of loss of faith in the father). If other of the essays are less inspired, they are not without pleasures: *Broken Blossoms* is seen to offer "fetishism over sadism, which is no real progress." The three directors fit with surprisingly little distortion into a schema under which Griffith reinforces patriarchy through theological terms, Vidor examines patriarchal society through physical and economic terms, while Minnelli ironizes over it through more purely psycho-sexual ones.

If Lang's application of literary and psychoanalytic theory is wide-ranging and solid, his ventures into film history lead to confusion between melodrama as a critical tool and as an industry practice. An odd use of the American Film Institute Catalog statistics for features of the 1920s leads him to conclude that "almost every film was understood at the time to be a melodrama." The reverse would be closer to the truth. From the time of Griffith's Biographs onwards, the film industry has understood and promoted melodramas as everything *but* melodrama, a word they (and the audience) shunned as meaning "failed drama" or, at best, old-fashioned drama. In a sense, this book simply gets caught in the confusion over which films now should be included in the rapidly expanding boundaries of "melodrama," as the topic has lost its lowbrow stigma and found fashionableness in film studies over the last twenty years (especially since Thomas Elsaesser's 1972 "Tales of Sound and Fury"). Thus while Lang sorts out distinctions between tragedy and melodrama, it is less evident how his subject might be delimited from drama it-

self. If *The Crowd* is a key melodrama, it's difficult to imagine which Hollywood silent films would *not* be melodramas.

Although characters' words occasionally get mangled in the service of its argument, *American Film Melodrama* grapples with Hollywood's central subject of the American family under the daunting ideological intricacies that come from melodrama's strange way of being simultaneously reactionary (as in justifying society's status quo to a presumed female audience) and radical (by identifying "evil unequivocally, which makes it more difficult for human misery to be subsumed under the form of a necessity"). In certain theoretical ways, Lang has leapt past anything available on film melodrama, as if in reaction to the still-unwritten standard history of his slippery genre.

While we await that history, the great sourcebook remains the 1987 British Film Institute reader, *Home Is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film* (distributed in the US by Indiana University Press), which includes a superb background essay by editor Christine Gledhill, the seminal Elsaesser piece, and two masterly close readings against which Lang's chapters on the same films can't compete: Julia Lesage on *Broken Blossoms* and Linda Williams on *Stella Dallas*.

SCOTT SIMMON

The Dame in the Kimono

Hollywood, Censorship, and the Production Code from the 1920s to the 1960s

By Leonard J. Leff and Jerold L. Simmons. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990. $22.50.

With edicts such as the one requiring married couples to keep somebody's foot on the floor while in bed together, Hollywood's production code has entered American folklore, like the Forty Niners and Jazz coming up the river from New Orleans. *The Dame in the Kimono* retreads many of the old vehicles, but branches usefully into less familiar territory, in particular the off-again, on-again relationships between the MPAA and Martin Quigley's Legion of Decency.

Leff and Simmons draw on increasingly abundant files of university archives and library study centers to render a series of case histories, starting at *Dead End* and ending, with most of the Code, on *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Supported by the memories of former staff members, screenwriters, and studio liaisons, the authors shape pictures of Hays, Breen, and Johnston as well-meaning employees of the system who wore their power gingerly, encouraging an appeal of tough decisions to the Association Board—studio presidents who would have to live with precedent. In the long run, everybody's arbiter was long-term box office. As Breen said about *Of Human Bondage,* it was "the wrong kind of film—the kind of film which constantly gets us into hot water." As early as *She Done Him Wrong,* the story is a case study in hypocrisy. Nevertheless, Breen is sometimes admirably supportive of the film-makers, on *Dead End,* for example. At best he was a sort of script doctor, seeking changes to satisfy everyone. Breen did the dirty work. Hays and Johnston fronted with political and private power.

A few quibbles: conclusions of the Payne Study are summarized as "That the movies exert an influence ther can be no doubt. But it is our opinion that this influence is specific for a given child and a given movie." (37) There ought to be a *not* in that second sentence. "When Sidney Kent learned that the Fox studios planned to produce *The Power and the Glory*—the story of a railroad tycoon whose son fathered a child with his stepmother—he intervened immediately." (35) But in the end that's just how the film did come out. The Flaherty-Murnau *Tabu* is described as "Paramount's art theatre import." (61)

A certain amount of the book's writing itself evokes period Sunday Supplements. Examples: "On [Breen's] return, he approached Hays and found the General with ears—and arms—spread wide." (121) "Joe Breen liked steaks and liquor. The father of three sons and three daughters, he probably liked sex." (191) "The thrust of the scene all too apparent, Shurlock and Lynch immediately advised some cuts to remove even the hint of rape." (114) Tut tut.

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JOHN FELL

Israeli Cinema

East/West and the Politics of Representation

By Ella Shohat. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989. $30.00 cloth, $13.95 paper.

It is almost impossible to get to grips with the phenomenon of Israel. An ancient people, a young state. A population of 600,000 in 1948, and over four million in the nineties. Socialist sanctuary or capitalist oppressor. Darling of the left in the fifties, a place where deserts bloomed and kibbutzim seemed to show new social possibilities. . . . But now David seems to have turned into Goliath.

If change and flux has been the order of the day, we are lucky that much of the scene has been captured on film, both documentary and feature. Starting with the brothers Lumière, cameramen have, since 1897, trudged over the Holy Land shooting for a variety of purposes. Some were biblical evangelists. Some were British army photographers. Many were Zionist apologists making public relations films.

Though the first features were only shot in the thirties, and then rarely, over 200 have been shot since 1960. Some, like *Exodus,* were really Hollywood-based and established the sabra superman image. Most were local productions filmed for under $250,000. Few have been heard of or seen in the US and yet they represent a unique picture of a nation and a land in transition.

Unfortunately, little exists in print telling us about Israeli cinema. Ora Gloria Jacob-Arzooni wrote a dissertation in 1975 which was published in 1983. It was a start but methodologically flawed. In 1978 Guy Hennebelle and Janine Euvrard put together an impressionistic book of interviews with Jewish and Arab film-makers, which gives another perspective. Besides these longer studies there have also been shorter monographs by Israelis such as Nathan Gross, Aryeh Agmon, and Renen Schorr. All these works give us partial glimpses of the field but what has been lacking is a comprehensive overview, which is partially what Shohat attempts here.

She defines her task as an attempt to offer a coherent theoretical and critical account of Israeli cinema. The main concerns of the book are the political uses of representation, in particular the way Palestinian Arabs and Sephardim (Jews from Iraq, Yemen, Persian and North African backgrounds) are seen on the screen. What is completely left out is any attempt to evaluate directors or directorial intention. Shohat's interests are the text itself, the relationship between film texts, and the intersection between film and the historic cultural process. The discourse of the book is unabashedly political rather than artistic.

It is a monumental task. How does she manage it? In some ways superbly, in other ways atrociously. It is this tension between excellence and rubbish that makes the book so hard to assess.

What does Shohat do well? First, she presents a very comprehensive picture of the totality of Israeli cinema. She appears to have either read everything or seen everything of worth about the subject. Thus she takes us from the early films of the Yishuv (the Jewish resettlement), through the films of the forties and the fifties, past the Burekas comedies of the sixties and seventies that deal with the Sephardim, up to the personal films of the seventies and the Palestinian wave of the eighties.

In the main, Shohat's broad assessment of the periods and the underlying strategies behind the film-makers' work is extremely perceptive. Thus she is very good in summarizing and recapturing for us the pioneer work of Nathan Axelrod, Baruch Agadati, and Yaakov Ben-Dov in the thirties. In analyzing the early features, such as *Oded the Wanderer* (1933) or Alexander Ford's *Sabra* (1933), she correctly emphasizes the push to mythologize the redemption of the land and project the picture of a new breed of native Jew.

She is also at her best when analyzing the personal cinema of the seventies. Where the earlier cinema had been based on heroic nationalism, part of the cinema of the seventies emphasizes disillusion with nationalist values. In films such as Judd Neeman's *The Dress* and in the work of Yitzhak Yeshurun and others, we are in the post-Yom Kippur War world where all values are challenged—a world of loners, where nothing is sacred, nothing believable. Shohat analyzes the crisis and the depression, setting the films against both a seventies milieu and within the influences of French and European cinema. She also provides a vital analysis of the work of Uri Zohar, one of Israel's most

important film-makers, who later abandoned cinema for Jewish orthodoxy, and she reminds us of the importance of Mosheh Mizrahi and his compassionate films on women and the Sephardim.

Though Shohat's subject is the films themselves, with an occasionally devastating analysis, as in the case of *Sallah Shabbati,* she occasionally widens her gaze. Thus she gives us a fairly full picture of the foundations of finance and production in the eighties which is vital for us to understand the constraints under which Israeli films are made.

In the end, however, Shohat's book remains highly problematic. Her over-riding concern is the analysis of political representation. Therefore it is vital for us to understand her roots, her underlying mentors, so to speak. Here she is very open. The Palestinians are her heroes, and her inspiration is Third World political ideology, drawn from the anti-colonialist discussions of Frantz Fanon and Albert Memmi. On the specifically Arab and Zionist scene, her texts are the works of Edward Said and Maxime Rodinson. Said's thesis is that Islam is a gentle, honorable culture and not savage and barbaric as western scholars, who invented their own brand of "the orient," have implied in the past. Rodinson is an anti-Israeli critic whose books have almost nothing good to say of the Jewish state. In the political world, I suppose, you pays your money and you takes your choice. However, it is surprising in a scholarly book to find no reference to any of the major Israeli critics and historians such as Shlomo Avineri, Nadav Safran, or even Howard Sachar. Shohat's reliance on Said, positing a romanticized view of the Middle East, simply doesn't fit with reality. Thus there is little mention of Khomeinism, Moslem fundamentalism, Gaddaffi, the Iran-Iraq wars, or terrorism in the book. Shohat cites with approval an Arab actor in *A Very Narrow Bridge* who changes the text of the film, arguing "Why would a PLO militant kill a woman just because she falls in love with a Jew?" Evidently Shohat had not heard of the 200 Arabs killed by other Arabs during the Intifada for collaboration, or doesn't consider it relevant.

Shohat's driving thesis is that the Arabs have been forgotten, that they are either not mentioned in Israeli films or not treated with sympathy or understanding, and that their case for a homeland is not put overwhelmingly. With a few exceptions in the eighties, the facts bear her out, but her treatment of them implies a kind of historic amnesia. Though a lot of history is sketched in, the wars of 1948, 1967, and 1973 and Arab terrorism get hardly a mention, although they are the bases of the Israelis' paranoia. Without discussing the wars, without discussing Nasser's threats, without discussing the shock of the Yom Kippur War, one simply cannot understand where Israelis and Israeli film-makers are coming from.

The second maligned or forgotten group for Shohat are the Sephardim. Here, interesting comments on the way the Sephardim are portrayed in the Bourekas films, and in the comedies of Zeev Revach and George Ovadia, are set within a hopelessly distorted political analysis.

The Sephardim, who mostly came to Israel in the early fifties, had not just a rough beginning but a beginning that denied them any cultural heritage and pride. Few Israelis today would deny that or justify that history. That history and that treatment, which were products of circumstances, shortsightedness, and pressure is, however, seen by Shohat as part of a fiendish plot by the ruling Labor party and Ashkenazi Jews (the early European settlers of Israel) to keep the Sephardim in their place. And, according to Shohat, the plot to repress the Sephardim goes on today.

In reality, the Sephardim are today the main supporters of the Likud, Israel's right-wing party which is opposed to all territorial concessions. Since Shohat views the Sephardim as in love with a mystical past and really blood brothers of the Arabs, she has to do some nifty foot work to justify their attitudes. Thus she writes, "The high Sephardi vote for the Likud has nothing to do with the latter's policy towards the Arabs. It is a minimal and misplaced expression of Sephardic revolt against the Labor party oppression (especially as within the present system the Sephardim cannot represent themselves." This is sheer nonsense (or wishful thinking) bearing no relationship to current Israeli politics.

The unreality of Shohat's political point of view, as opposed to her sensible textual analysis, comes out fully in the final chapter, dealing with the Palestinian wave in recent Israeli cinema. In the

eighties, in the pre-Intifada days, Israel suddenly produced a spate of films foregrounding the problems of Israeli Arabs, Palestinians, and the occupation on the West Bank. These films, such as *A Narrow Bridge, Beyond the Walls, The Smile of the Lamb, Avanti Popolo,* and *Hamsin* were highly critical of Israeli attitudes, and presented Arabs extremely sympathetically. Shohat's reaction is to critique these films for beings centered on Israeli doves, and for failing to present the overall Arab case.

Considering the circumstances, this argument is incredibly naive. Most Israelis, rightly or wrongly, still consider themselves in the middle of an ongoing war for existence, and certainly under threat from Iraq, Syria, and terrorism. To find Israeli film-makers, under those circumstances, expressing sympathy and understanding for "the enemy" seems to me admirable and astonishing. No other major national cinema has ever done such a thing in a similar situation. But from Shohat they get nothing but criticism.

In the end Shohat's blinkered perspective prevents an interesting book from being the major tour de force it could have been.

ALAN ROSENTHAL

The Illustrated History of Soviet Cinema

By Neya Zorkaya. New York: Hippocrene Books, 1989. $25.00

The past few years have witnessed an impressive resurgence of international interest in Soviet-produced films. Driven by Gorbachev-inspired policies of *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring), the Soviet film industry has undergone a radical overhauling which has led to the completion of a growing number of artistically impressive and socially relevant new films—as well as the release of previously censored or shelved films made in the late seventies and early eighties. High level "entertainment summits" have been held between US and Soviet film-makers and critics, and special showings of recent Soviet films have been presented in major cultural centers in Western Europe and the US (including a program of 17 important Soviet films representing all 15 republics shown in major cities in the US two years ago). A few recent Soviet films have made it past the film-festival and art-house circuit to enter into commercial distribution.

Neya Zorkaya, an established and long-time Soviet film critic and essayist, has attempted to further the present spirit of mutual exchange by writing an illustrated history of Soviet cinema directly for the US market rather than simply translating into English one of her previous film books published in the Soviet Union. While Zorkaya is to be lauded for this ambitious undertaking, her book, unfortunately, is neither well conceived nor effectively realized.

In her introduction, Zorkaya makes it clear that her purpose is not to write a comprehensive history of Soviet cinema, but rather to "conduct a brief survey of the history of the Soviet cinema from the vantage ground [*sic*] of the 1980's and the approaching world cinema centennial in 1995." It is, of course, not clear why a brief, general survey of Soviet cinema is needed, given the ready availability in English of critical scholarship in Soviet film history which is more sophisticated than Zorkaya attempts. Her book is clearly not intended to speak to the interested student and scholar of Soviet cinema, nor does it do so. Neither, however, does it speak to the film enthusiast or general reader. Even as a brief survey, the book falls short of its own mark on several counts. It is badly organized, poorly written, filled with stylistic and printing errors, and sloppily laid out and illustrated. In the introduction, Zorkaya makes the claim that her brief survey is accompanied by illustrations which "will be just as important as the main text itself, if not more so." And yet, the illustrations are poor in quality, not well integrated with the text, and graphically uninteresting. It is difficult to imagine the intended audience for this book or why it was published.

DANIEL GOULDING

Bogle, Donald. *Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in Ameri-*

eighties, in the pre-Intifada days, Israel suddenly produced a spate of films foregrounding the problems of Israeli Arabs, Palestinians, and the occupation on the West Bank. These films, such as *A Narrow Bridge, Beyond the Walls, The Smile of the Lamb, Avanti Popolo,* and *Hamsin* were highly critical of Israeli attitudes, and presented Arabs extremely sympathetically. Shohat's reaction is to critique these films for beings centered on Israeli doves, and for failing to present the overall Arab case.

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can Films. New York: Crossroad, 1989. $15.95 paper. This new, expanded edition now covers films through the eighties, but except for the advent of powerful black superstars Richard Pryor and Eddie Murphy, and of director Spike Lee, Bogle sees American films as still "dominated by sterotypes and distortions"—particularly brutal for black women. This established and definitive history now extends through what Bogle calls "the era of Tan"—of deemphasizing racial differences and racism, with its peculiar contribution the black-white buddy film. Bogle also deals cogently with *The Color Purple,* the puzzling career of Whoopi Goldberg, and the special talent of Spike Lee for creating "black films with a black sensibility." And he remains hopeful for the future. E. C.

Levy, Emanual. *And the Winner Is . . .: The History and Politics of the Oscar Awards.* New York: Ungar, 1990. $15.95 paper. Reissue of the 1987 work.

Graham, Gerald G. *Canadian Film Technology, 1896–1986.* Cranbury, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1990. $42.50. This work traces specifically Canadian contributions to film technology—those connected with animation at the very innovative National Film Board, and also devices for documentary and later IMAX super-large-screen filming and projection. With an odd epilogue on the general prospects of technological research under current social and business conditions. E. C.

Hanke, Ken. *Charlie Chan at the Movies.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1989. $29.95. The Fox and Monogram series gets a surprisingly in-depth treatment here. Hanke seems familiar not only with all the Chan movies, but with most of the genre films of the era. Countering charges of racism in the casting and treatment of Chan (while Chinese actors such as Keye Luke were cast as Chan's sons, non-Chinese actors were invariably cast as the great detective himself), he notes that the movies were "a tremendous step forward" for their "Yellow Peril" time, and quotes Luke *re* the movie Chan: "My God! You've got a Chinese hero!" Hanke shows an odd predilection for the Roland Winters Chans—the last gasp of the series, and uniformly forgettable mysteries —and reveals that, alarmingly, four of the first five Warner Olands (the series's first gasp) have been lost. If the famous Chan aphorisms, lovingly quoted here, seem in retrospect generally vacuous, Hanke's affection for the films—and for their main characters—helps explain why those films were, and perhaps still are, so popular. DON WILLIS

Haver, Ronald. *A Star is Born: The Making of the 1954 Movie and Its 1983 Restoration.* New York: Harper and Row, 1990. $12.95 paper. Reissue of the 1988 work.

Hayes, R. M. *3-D Movies: A History and Filmography of Stereoscopic Cinema.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1989. $45.00. Hayes is a hard-bitten film technician who doesn't suffer fools gladly, and the history of 3-D as he writes it is one long panorama of foolishness, featuring bursts of technical success quickly sabotaged by managerial ineptitude. Hayes also debunks easy hopes for holographic cinema, and explains the technical trickery behind pseudo-holographic displays. Unfortunately, the book utterly lacks normal scholarly documentation, but it is full of posters, stills, and some technical shots. E. C.

Insdorf, Annette. *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust.* New York: Cambridge Press, 1990. $16.95 paper. Reisue of the 1983 work.

MacCann, Richard Dyer, ed. *The First Film Makers.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1989. Cloth $32.50, paper $15.00. MacCann is equally leery of film theory that hovers too far above actual movies and of "determinist" perspectives. In consequence, much of this anthology emphasizes biography, dates, titles, and plot exegeses. A first chapter, "The Earliest Days," is somewhat limited in scope. Subsequent coverage on Ince and Hart, Griffith, and Stroheim casts wider nets. While some material is, to say the least, familiar (Ramsaye, Brownlow, Knight, Jacobs, Eisenstein, Weinberg), other inclusions merit special attention. Tom Gunning has a fine analysis of Griffith's variant patterns of parallel editing. The translation of a Jean Mitry essay on Ince, including Martin Sopocy's filmography, is welcome indeed. MacCann digs for some of his text which includes period pieces out of *Exhibitor's Herald* (1924–25), *The New Republic* (1915), *Photoplay* (1924), and William S. Hart's 1929 *My Life East and West.* The anthologist is a good editor too; he cuts to the quick for relevancy.

Except for editor's prefaces, which are sometimes extensive, all selections have been previously published. An appendix that may prove to be of particular use lists relevant films available in video. MacCann calls for a careful study of Griffith's one-reelers. To this reviewer's mind, Joyce E. Jesionowski, *Thinking in Pictures: Dramatic Structure in D. W. Griffith's Biograph Films* (University of California Press, 1987) fits this prescription nicely. JOHN FELL

Mora, Carl J. *Mexican Cinema: Reflections of a Society, 1896–1988.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990. $10.95. This updating of the 1982 baseline study contains a new chapter on the 1981–1989 period; the original lengthy list of films has been replaced by detailed filmographies of important directors; a note on film sources is also provided.

Okuda, Ted. *Grand National, Producers Releasing Corporation, and Screen Guild/Lippert: Complete Filmographies with Studio Histories.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1989. $35. Catalogues over 500 titles produced and/or released by the three companies between 1936 and 1955. A wealth of Poverty Row lore here. Sample highlight: a photo of "The Flying Serpent," complete with plainly visible string upon which said serpent "flew." Sample long-lost find: *Rimfire,* a 1949 western co-written by Frank Wisbar, which sounds like a remake of the Wisbar-directed, semi-classic horror movie *Strangler of the Swamp* (1945), itself a remake of his 1935 fantasy *Fahrmann Maria.* The fine art of recycling! DON WILLIS

Tsivian, Yuri, ed. *Silent Witnesses: Russian Films, 1908–1919.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press (for BFI), 1990. $75.00. This bilingual volume (Italian and English on facing pages) was put together by an international research team. Elegantly produced and with illustrations for many of the films, it describes some 300 fiction films from the tsarist period that have been restored by Gosfilmofond in Moscow. (The book is also the catalog of a traveling exhibition organized by the Pordenone silent-film festival.) Yuri Tsivian provides some intriguing ideas about the popular-culture roots of early Russian cinema (which differed from American cinema, particularly, in demanding unhappy endings, among other things). The bulk of the material on the films themselves is derived from contemporary reviews. Titles are also given in Cyrillic characters. Critical annotations of mysterious origins (signed with initials that correspond to nobody in the editorial team, except one of the translators) are provided for a few of the films. A valuable beginning for Western study of pre-Revolutionary cinema. E. C.

Virilio, Paul. *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception.* London and New York: 1989. $50.00 hardcover, $16.95 paper. Tr. by Patrick camiller of 1984 French edition. Coultass, Clive. *Images for Battle.* Cranbury, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1989. $45.00 hardcover. Peace may be breaking out, but war books continue. Within the genre, however, it would be difficult to find two more different works. Virilio has written a fascinating, complex, arrantly speculative, original essay on the use of cinema techniques in twentieth-century conflicts. He ranges widely from US civil war military photography to current video battlefield surveillance. Film directors, political leaders, military figures abound. As do provocative assertions: "The star system and the sex symbol were the result of that unforeseen perceptual logistics which developed intensively in every field during the First World War." (23). His focus is always on seeing.

Coultass too is concerned with ways of seeing, but quite differently. He describes and comments on the commercial and "documentary" films made in Great Britain during and about events of World War II. A few of the films mirrored reality, some were social documents, others reflected public and official opinion, and many created or perpetuated comforting myths and illusions. Most were forgettable and are forgotten. The films of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger and a few of the "documentaries" such as *London Can Take It* and *Listen to Britain* are still worth seeing.

DAVID L. PALETZ

Reference

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This collection of 24 chapters by various hands (19 "based on" articles from *American Cinematographer,* the rest written for the book) describes how a potpourri of Hollywood movies and serials came to be made. After examining the silent cinema (the Lon Chaney *Hunchback of Notre Dame, Wings*) and the transition to sound (Roland West's *The Bat* and its sound version *The Bat Whispers, Bulldog Drummond*), the pieces range from 1930 (*All Quiet on the Western Front,* Henry King's obscure *Hell Harbor*) through 1955 *(The Night of the Hunter).* The book's title is strictly catch-all. "Adventure" includes the unfinished RKO prehistoric fantasy *Creation* (1930–32), the *Tarzan* and *Flash Gordon* series, *The Lost Patrol,* and its Western remake *Bad Lands; Laura* has "Romance" pretty much to itself; *Dracula, Frankenstein, The Black Cat, Cat People, D.O.A., Out of the Past,* and *Rope* (among others) represent "Terror." The quality of the chapters is variable; those on *All Quiet, Hell Harbor,* the serials, *Creation,* and *The Black Cat* have the richest textures; others (such as

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the accounts of *Hunchback, Cat People,* and *Rope*) are skimpier than versions of these pictures' production stories published elsewhere. But collectively they trace in considerable detail the evolution during some 50 years of diverse techniques, practices, and resources, including rear projection, miniatures, travelling mattes, lighting, camera blimps, special effects, location shooting, doubles, second units, and set construction. Numerous thumbnail biographical sketches (often of unsung ASC members) as well as a handsomely printed collection of striking photos and drawings add up to a first-rate job of book production. But not, alas, a first-rate book, for (like too many other volumes of this kind) this one uses anecdotes about movie-making not just to replace ideas about movies but to express a blanket contempt for such ideas, regardless of their quality. Editor George Turner denies that he's merely wallowing in they-don't-make-'em-like-this-anymore nostalgia but gives the show away when he snidely cites "arguments by [unnamed] cineastes as to whether [*Laura*] qualifies as *film-noir*—as if that matters a damn" and implies that you're a pointy-head if you view *Out Of The Past* as anything besides a "solid, entertaining melodrama." Is that why he and his collaborators quote from many other sources without providing any notes or a bibliography—because they fear being mistaken for these awful "cineastes"? *The Cinema of Adventure, Romance & Terror* has much to offer, especially to people who have just seen those of its subjects that are available in revival or on video, but its tiresome, seemingly willful intellectual poverty muffles its virtues.

MICHAEL DEMPSEY

Horror

A Connoisseur's Guide to Literature and Film

By Leonard Wolf. New York and Oxford: Facts on File, 1989. $27.95

Like any connoisseur, Leonard Wolf discusses what he knows and what he likes; the art is one of well-informed selection. There is no point quarreling about his opinions, nor even about his choices, although I do wish that more works—like *Dawn of the Dead*—had been given their own entries (the volume is arranged like an encyclopedia, a series of brief discussions of stories, novels, and movies, alphabetized by title) and that several crucial works—like *The King in Yellow*—had been included. In other words, I'm glad Wolf included Machen's story "The Great God Pan," happen to disagree with his reading of it, and don't understand why he left out Machen's novel *The Three Imposters.*

As a "guide," let alone as a wide-ranging reference book on an important body of material addressed to an audience that knows and cares about the subject (I hope that doesn't end up as a blurb!), *Horror: A Connoisseur's Guide to Literature and Film* ought, I believe, to have included entries on writers and film-makers, not just on works. One wants to be able to look up, and be stimulated to think more deeply about, the lives and careers of Poe and Lovecraft, Lewton and Karloff, Whale and Hooper in a guide to horror in literature and film. One also wants Poe's name spelled correctly (Wolf often has "Allen," not "Allan"—twice in the entry on "The Pit and the Pendulum"). Whether they began as errors or as typos, the numerous mistakes in this volume—which should certainly, given the publisher, at least be a file of facts—render it, to say the least, unreliable. Egregious typos like "astutenes" (p. 54) can be amusing, but it is an irritating, sloppy mistake to call *Bride of Frankenstein,* as Wolf consistently does, *The Bride of Frankenstein,* or to delete the *A* from the title of *A Nightmare on Elm Street.* What connoisseur of Bordeaux would write "LaFeet Rothschild"?

But Wolf commits errors that go beyond the dread realm of Typo into the valley of Forget It. For example, the article on *Dead of Night* does have some good things to say about the film, but it offers "The Horse Driver" as the title of "The Hearse Driver," provides no information about the condensed export version, and badly misdescribes the climax of the picture: in the movie, the dreamer (named Walter Craig and played by Mervyn Johns) kills the psychiatrist and then is pursued by characters from the inner stories until they get him and he wakes up; but to quote Wolf, "Foley, who has been exasperated by the skepticism of a psychiatrist

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this yearbook breaks up the potential monotony of its A-to-Z recap of the films of 1989 with periodic, more extended analyses of selected "Films of the Year," "Turkeys of the Year," etc. Of the dozen or so contributor critics, Raymond Durgnat, Harlan Kennedy, and Trevor Willsmer offer the most insights and display the quickest wit. Extensive appendices include filmbook reviews, obits, awards, and quotes. DON WILLIS

"Phantom of the Movies, The." *The Phantom's Ultimate Video Guide.* New York: Dell, 1989. $12.95. *The New Daily News*'s anonymous B-movie critic has contributed a new volume to the growing list of film guides mixing Hollywood classics and drive-in fillers. His 4000 reviews cover movie classics *(King Kong),* cult favorites *(Night Tide),* and recent direct-to-video features *(Gourmet Chef from Hell).* Indeed, his only criterion for including a film is that it must be available on video. The reviews are inconveniently listed alphabetically by genre, although all film titles also appear in a single index. Credits listed for each entry include year of release, director, principal performers, running time, and video distributor. Michael Weldon's similar *The Psychotronic Encyclopedia* is far superior, but the Phanton's coverage of recent releases suggests that Weldon needs to publish a more current edition.
RICHARD B. ARMSTRONG

Pickard, Roy. *Who Played Who on the Screen.* New York: Hippocrene Books, 1989. $37.50. As far as I know, this listing of performers is unique—and will be especially useful to fans, but critics lacking Pauline Kael's total recall will also find it a handy resource. There are even entries for characters so far played by only one performer, but for which Pickard (a BBC producer) evidently harbors hopes of sequels: Lolita, Popeye, Joan Crawford. E. C.

Prelinger, Richard, and Celeste R. Hoffnar. *Footage 89: North American Film and Video Sources.* Prelinger Associates, 430 W. 14th St., Rm. 206, New York, NY 10014, 1989. $95.00. A lot of reference books seem to have no clear idea of who their readers might be (if any). This one is quite the reverse: it's something that anybody needing "stock footage" *has* to have—a detailed guide to materials available all over the continent, including information on whether access and licensing are possible. The coverage seems very comprehensive indeed—I turned up a couple of sources in my own backyard that I had never heard of, including one specializing in images of electric cars (from 1896 onward). Anybody researching documentaries ought to have this volume handy. E. C.

Spindle, Les. *Julie Andrews: A Bio-Bibliography.* Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1989. $37.95. Biographical sketch, summaries of the films and their early reviews, listing of stage and TV appearances.

Woolery, George W. *Animated TV Specials.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1989. $59.50. Broadcast histories, brief summaries, credits covering the years 1962–1987.

Scripts

Chatman, Seymour, and Guido Fink, eds. *L'avventura.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989. $30.00 cloth; $15.00 paper. Chatman explores the erotic "existentialism" of the film and Fink provides a biographical essay. With several statements by Antonioni and the usual reviews and commentaries. E. C.

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this yearbook breaks up the potential monotony of its A-to-Z recap of the films of 1989 with periodic, more extended analyses of selected "Films of the Year," "Turkeys of the Year," etc. Of the dozen or so contributor critics, Raymond Durgnat, Harlan Kennedy, and Trevor Willsmer offer the most insights and display the quickest wit. Extensive appendices include filmbook reviews, obits, awards, and quotes. DON WILLIS

"Phantom of the Movies, The." *The Phantom's Ultimate Video Guide.* New York: Dell, 1989. $12.95. *The New Daily News*'s anonymous B-movie critic has contributed a new volume to the growing list of film guides mixing Hollywood classics and drive-in fillers. His 4000 reviews cover movie classics *(King Kong),* cult favorites *(Night Tide),* and recent direct-to-video features *(Gourmet Chef from Hell).* Indeed, his only criterion for including a film is that it must be available on video. The reviews are inconveniently listed alphabetically by genre, although all film titles also appear in a single index. Credits listed for each entry include year of release, director, principal performers, running time, and video distributor. Michael Weldon's similar *The Psychotronic Encyclopedia* is far superior, but the Phanton's coverage of recent releases suggests that Weldon needs to publish a more current edition.
RICHARD B. ARMSTRONG

Pickard, Roy. *Who Played Who on the Screen.* New York: Hippocrene Books, 1989. $37.50. As far as I know, this listing of performers is unique—and will be especially useful to fans, but critics lacking Pauline Kael's total recall will also find it a handy resource. There are even entries for characters so far played by only one performer, but for which Pickard (a BBC producer) evidently harbors hopes of sequels: Lolita, Popeye, Joan Crawford. E. C.

Prelinger, Richard, and Celeste R. Hoffnar. *Footage 89: North American Film and Video Sources.* Prelinger Associates, 430 W. 14th St., Rm. 206, New York, NY 10014, 1989. $95.00. A lot of reference books seem to have no clear idea of who their readers might be (if any). This one is quite the reverse: it's something that anybody needing "stock footage" *has* to have—a detailed guide to materials available all over the continent, including information on whether access and licensing are possible. The coverage seems very comprehensive indeed—I turned up a couple of sources in my own backyard that I had never heard of, including one specializing in images of electric cars (from 1896 onward). Anybody researching documentaries ought to have this volume handy. E. C.

Spindle, Les. *Julie Andrews: A Bio-Bibliography.* Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1989. $37.95. Biographical sketch, summaries of the films and their early reviews, listing of stage and TV appearances.

Woolery, George W. *Animated TV Specials.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1989. $59.50. Broadcast histories, brief summaries, credits covering the years 1962–1987.

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Textbooks

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TOM KING

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Theory

Looking On

Images of Femininity in the Visual Arts and Media

Edited by Rosemary Betterton. London: Pandora Press, 1987.

Rosemary Betterton's anthology contains a rich collection of essays on the construction of feminine images in advertising, fine arts, photography, and pornography. Compiled from a wide variety of mostly British publications, this collection probes what it means for women and feminists to "look on" at often contradictory images of femininity and feminine sexuality in both high and low culture. Though it contains no articles on film, the focus on how women participate in a male-dominated voyeuristic "culture of looking" will be of special interest to feminist film scholars.

Most of the contributions are situated within Marxist, structuralist or psychoanalytic perspectives. But they have been chosen for their practical, accessible analyses of specific visual media and are thus ideal for undergraduate courses in visual media. A first section offers a range of methods and approaches applied primarily to advertising images. It includes some of the ground-breaking essays in this field: Griselda Pollock's important 1977 essay from *Screen Education,* Judith Williamson's 1978 "Decoding Advertisements" and Kathy Myers's 1982 "Fashion 'n' Passion." These classic essays are counterbalanced in subsequent sections by more recent essays complicating and contextualizing representations of women with issues of class, race, and a wider range of media. A section on pornography includes a range of "positions" on the topic, from an interview with Andrea Dworkin (anti-pornography) to a remarkably concise gem of an article by Mandy Merk (anti-censorship) to Kathy Myers's argument that pornography cannot be defined independent of its conditions of production and consumption. A final section on "new images" by women artists contains fine essays by Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen, Rosemary Betterton, and Lisa Tickner. LINDA WILLIAMS

Making Meaning

Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema

By David Bordwell. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989. $29.50

It's hard to avoid superlatives when talking about David Bordwell's work. Let me simply say that here is a book which, for lucidity, breadth, erudition, and rigor, only he could have written. It addresses and anlyzes interpretative practice in a way that only the most self-absorbed critic can ignore, and then only at his own risk. In 274 pages, Bordwell unpacks the underlying assumptions of what passes for the successful (i.e., publishable) interpretation of films. He does so out of solid and vast knowledge, not only of the literature that he targets—cinematic exegesis—but of thousands of pages in areas that the rest of us only hear about, but never find time to read. (As I. A. Richards once asked about René Wellek, "How can anyone have read so much?") As in his previous work, Bordwell's reading has filtered through a shrewd and sensible judgment. Yet his views are couched in language of almost sweet reasonableness; he takes critics on their own terms, gives them the benefit of the doubt, even when they seem to be saying pretty silly things. He seems constitutionally incapable of the cheap shot, despite the inviting postures of all those sitting ducks. Only in the last chapter does he make some general recommendations about changing the current state of affairs, and then he does so modestly and in the broadest terms, avoiding the *ad personam,* and generously including himself among those who could profit from a redirection of critical efforts.

Bordwell's focus is Academic Film Interpretation (he calls it "Interpretation, Inc."; dare I call it AFI?). He sees the emperor, without his clothes, as nothing but "institutionally sanctioned problem-solving." He deflates—beyond counterargument, to my mind—the widespread and complacent assumption that correct AFI derives immaculately and solidly from currently fashionable film theory. As a matter of fact, he argues, AFI neither tests, deductively derives from, illustrates, nor offers fruitful insights into theories. Interpreters exercise

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a skill "which no more constitutes a theory of cinema than a good bicyclist's know-how amounts to a physics of moving bodies or a sociology of recreation." Rather, both in their inferential reasoning and in the rhetorical style in which they present their conclusions, interpreters follow a set of familiar conventions which only concerted vested interest can keep them ignorant of. It is a tacit and covert conventionality, resting on basic "reasoning practices" which the institution has come to endorse—such as inventing a world in which the text operates, finding a "point" in the story, discovering implicit meanings, and/or constructing repressed or symptomatic meanings. Indeed, it is nothing more than the difference between the last two maneuvers that separates "old-fashioned" explicatory, New Critical (including structuralist) interpretation from symptomatic post-structuralist —Marxist, psychoanalytic, feminist, deconstructive—interpretation.

No, for all their deference to theoretical authority, interpreters write (and publishers publish) AFI which follows a basic standard recipe: 1. "Assume the most pertinent meanings to be either implicit or symptomatic or both," 2. "Make salient one or more semantic fields," 3. "Map the semantic fields onto the film at several levels by correlating textual units with semantic features," and 4. "Articulate an argument that demonstrates the novelty and validity of the interpretation." 1–3 are the inferential structure of the argument and 4 is its rhetorical fleshing out. Here are some subhypotheses and examples of this process:

Explication of implicit meanings: use conventions like "unity" ("my interpretation shows how this film holds together") and "transmission" (my interpretation shows how this film goes from a sender to a receiver much like an ordinary message).

Revelation of symptomatic meanings: "Unmask! unmask! this film must be debunked—because every film secretes something significant about the culture which produces or consumes it."

Symptomaticians tend to mock old-fashioned explicators and to revel in the novelty of their own approach. Bordwell uses history, here as elsewhere in the book, as powerful medicine to cure this myopic self-delusion. He has gone back and *read* books that are only names on dusty covers to most film scholars and their students, books by Kracauer, Deming, Tyler, Warshow, Wolfenstein and Leites, to show how these perfectly intelligent folk were doing important symptomatic criticism in the 1940s (Deming: "the Hollywood film presents, in veiled form, what the audience wants to escape from, in the manner of a dream"). As Bordwell points out, one need not be a sociologist to understand why symptomatic criticism is the current fashion: "A new event attract[s] young workers to a sparsely populated field. A rhetoric of absolutes pull[s] the new approach sharply away from its predecessors [thus enhancing job-application dossiers]. Broad exploratory work generate[s] some powerful exemplars." "Not," he sagely adds, "that Marxist, psychoanalytic, and feminist readings were welcomed with open arms; it is just that, in American institutions of higher education, intellectual disputes among competing premises and methods tend to be avoided simply by adding the 'new approach' onto existing structures." (Doesn't that sound like your sensible college dean?) Bordwell's capacity to "tell it like it is" is one of his more winning traits. One's mind would have to be hermetically sealed by a resident ideology to ignore the book's ring of downhome truth.

"Semantic field" is Bordwell's (slightly clumsy) term for congeries of meanings—meanings here thought of as issues worth thinking about, *bref,* themes. Representative themes for explicatory critics, largely humanistic and largely inherited from the New Criticism, include "reality and illusion, the artist's vocation, the alienation of modern life, the difficulties of loving," and the like. Symptomatic critics, on the other hand and for obvious reasons, prefer themes redolent of the "hermeneutics of suspicion"; instead of humanistic concerns with fate, love, and the individual, they toughly invoke power /subjection, law/desire and phallus/lack. One theme that almost *everybody* likes is "reflexivity": "This film is about some attribute of this film (or about cinema as a whole—as industry, as technology, as history, as auteur)"; "Sirk's films are about their own style."

To "prove" that they have picked the right semantic field, interpreters collect evidence, which they present in the form of "clusters," "doublets," "proportional series," and "hierarchies." To prove, for example, that the central theme of *The Seventh*

Seal is that modern man can only survive by preserving his illusions, the explicator introduces a variety of themes "concerning the continuity of life and art's transcendence of everyday existence." To prove that hysteria underlies *Letter from an Unknown Woman,* the symptomatician introduces "loss, silence, a repetitive sense of history, the possibility of male hysteria, the destabilization of identity."

But then the film must be *mapped* onto the chosen semantic field for the interpretation to succeed. Bordwell explains his metaphor: "mapping" means "selectively projecting according to prior coordinates." In so doing, the interpreter *makes meaning.* This explanation goes the constructivist trail first blazed by Gombrich and applied persuasively by Bordwell to cinema in *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Wisconsin, 1986). For example, the interpreter may employ heuristics that have proven plausible in the past. Punning is one such heuristic—hallways and alleyways can symbolize life-passage, a checkered motif on a table-cloth or a dress can signify "a potentially productive female [held] precisely 'in check' " (quotation marks are clear signs of punning). The punning heuristic is attractive as a schema because it is "representative" (alleys are like life passages), "available " (no special knowledge is required—it comes easily to mind for both author and reader), and "vivid" (it tends to be concrete and sensory). Bordwell goes on to distinguish between category schemata and person-based schemata. Genres are category schemata, even though the term is so vague: indeed, its very elasticity is part of its attractiveness. Subject to person-based schemata are characters (a character's trait gets transformed into what he *means:* e.g., each character in *I Vitelloni* means, though in his own way, the theme of provincial entrapment); film-makers (the whole *politique des auteurs,* despite what we know about the realities of film production); style (camera movement and distance: "At the end of *La notte,* 'Antonioni drifts away from his coupled protagonists with the evasive camera movement and overhead angle of the biologist' "); narration ("the narrator's point of view in *Suspicion*"), and the spectator ("identification": "The viewer identifies emotionally with the MacKennas in *The Man Who Knew Too Much*"; "Ozu's narrating persona is analogous to a host, the characters become, in effect, our guests").

The kinds of logic used to support assertions, that is, to map a film onto a semantic field, are always familiar and freely available, no matter what theory is the current rage. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.* But to persuade the reader that they *have* changed (one's livelihood may depend on it), the interpreter needs his rhetoric. Bordwell spends two chapters on this subject, one outlining it and the other exemplifying it.

Aristotle is his model: the interpreter invents (in the original sense: finds good reasons for her case), but also uses her ethos (she is rigorous, he is fair-minded, she is well-informed, he is well-connected) and/or pathos: (*L'Atalante* "humanizes the thief, modeling his frail body wasted by cold and hunger"). The argument goes deductively, by enthymeme (the reduced syllogism) or inductively, by example. It uses commonplaces—*topoi* ("A film should make its audience work")—and special places ("If the woman looks, the spectacle provokes, castration is in the air"). The argument follows a standard order or *dispositio.* The interpreter uses a fancy lingo *(elocutio)* to enhance his ethos of expertise and generally make things classy. (Witness the "blatantly persuasive effect of [this] passage: On how the flatness of Antonioni's shots eliminates tactility: 'To touch is to confirm, and people who are out of touch have a desperate need for tactile reassurance.' " *O mea culpa!*)

There follows a chapter illustrating the rhetoric of seven interpreters of *Psycho* (Douchet, Wood, Durgnat, Perkins, Bellour, Klinger and Poague). Again, the concreteness is refreshing (though here Bordwell gets too involved with the substance of the different readings and not enough with the rhetorical strategies adopted by the different interpreters).

Having laid bare its presuppositions, in his last chapter Bordwell demonstrates, to my satisfaction at least, that too much time and space is currently taken up by film interpretation, that film scholars should shift at least some of their energies and talents to other kinds of study. Part of the reason is the intellectual thinness of the activity (though he would not use so strong a term). To illustrate, he asks plaintively:

> [If] interrogation of one's presuppositions [is] the theoretical act par excellence, [why do] critics seldom indulge in it[?] Why do oppositional works rarely seem susceptible to symptomatic analysis? On what theoretical grounds can one defend the claim that to look is to express power? What are the explicit criteria for identifying a film's false resolution? What is the basis for taking the image displayed onscreen to be the trace of "the camera," for assuming that camera to have a "look," for assigning that look to a filmmaker or narrator or enunciator or viewer? Why should spectatorial activity be made synonymous with "identification"? Why should one personify the text as a body, or indulge in puns for the sake of interpretation? Most basically, by what criteria can one identify a textual gap or contradiction?

Good questions all. Don't hold your breath for the interpreters' convincing replies.

In short, too many current interpretive schemes "remain quite coarse-grained." And also conservative: people who spend their time doing interpretation make few contributions to our knowledge of other important things, like film style and aesthetics. The most advanced symptomatician is likely to revert to the tried-and-true insights of Arnheim, Kuleshov, Eisenstein, Bazin, and Burch. Interpreters take the tradition but do not return anything to it. Why don't they use some of their energy to ramify and refine the standard stylistic *aperçus*?

Bordwell has a program, and film departments interested in real progress can hardly afford to ignore it. Change our goals from "applications" of theories (which they aren't anyway) to genuine concern for hypotheses and questions. Say something meaningful, and hopefully true, about the *composition* of actual films (perhaps with the microscopic analytical techniques of a Bellour or a Ropars-Wuilleaumier). Write more "accurate, sharp, loving descriptions" of the surfaces of films (of the sort done by Manny Farber). Study particular films more deeply, in a wider historical context, thereby keeping our "critical language [from] flatten[ing] out our predecessors' difference." Bordwell calls for a "self-conscious historical poetics of cinema," which he conceives "as the study of how, in determinate circumstances, films are put together, serve specific functions, and achieve specific effects." The names of those who have done such work are clear and obvious: Arnheim, the Russian Formalists, Bazin (the evolution of the language of cinema), Burch (the history of Japanese cinematic style). Bordwell invites us to join him in rolling up our sleeves. Indeed, it's impossible to imagine his sleeves anywhere else.

SEYMOUR CHATMAN

Visual and Other Pleasures

By Laura Mulvey. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989. $35.00 cloth, $12.50 paper.

Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" has long been a founding document of feminist film theory; but its impact has tended to endow the essay with an illusory coherence and closure, while obscuring the very fragility of the formulation "feminist film theory." With the publication of *Visual and Other Pleasures,* however, Mulvey's influential essay reclaims some of its original tentativeness and irresolution. Lodged within this collection of texts on film, feminism and the avant-garde written between 1971 and 1986, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" emerges less as an authoritative theoretical statement than a conjunction of narratives that mutate and unfold throughout the book's fifteen essays.

The critique of visual culture undertaken by feminists in the early seventies was inseparable from an effort to understand the functioning of institutional and sexual power in everyday life. For Mulvey, as for other film-makers and critics associated with the BFI and *Screen* magazine, cinema in particular revealed the mechanisms of subjectification according to the implications of Lacanian-Althusserian models of spectatorship and identification. Because of its powerful ability to organize vision and narrative, film exposed how visual imagery reproduces gender relations, not only in terms of the content of representation, but in its very

> [If] interrogation of one's presuppositions [is] the theoretical act par excellence, [why do] critics seldom indulge in it[?] Why do oppositional works rarely seem susceptible to symptomatic analysis? On what theoretical grounds can one defend the claim that to look is to express power? What are the explicit criteria for identifying a film's false resolution? What is the basis for taking the image displayed onscreen to be the trace of "the camera," for assuming that camera to have a "look," for assigning that look to a filmmaker or narrator or enunciator or viewer? Why should spectatorial activity be made synonymous with "identification"? Why should one personify the text as a body, or indulge in puns for the sake of interpretation? Most basically, by what criteria can one identify a textual gap or contradiction?

Good questions all. Don't hold your breath for the interpreters' convincing replies.

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structuring of the viewing subject through the experience of spectatorship.

A frequent—and justified—criticsm of Mulvey's analysis of spectatorship is its all-too-categorical designation of man as bearer and woman as object of the "look." It is notable, then, that the writings on film melodrama reproduced here address oscillation and contradiction within these very categories—without, however, seriously challenging them. King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun* raises the possibility of the female spectator, but only by proposing her temporary and schizophrenic masculine identification. Nevertheless, in a more substantive discussion of Godard's images of women (cowritten with Colin MacCabe) the issue of the "sexed" point of view touches upon the general paradox of any counter-practice such as Godard's: the tension implicit in any critique of a system which simultaneously defines the conventions and possibilities of dialogue.

The chronological structure and juxtaposition of texts, however, renders the writings on film at once more complex than they would be taken individually and yet less central to the present volume. It may come as a surprise, for instance, to discover the terms of Mulvey's analysis of fetishism and voyeurism in Hitchcock's films already in place in a 1972 article provoked by the "Women as Furniture" series of pop artist Allen Jones. But the force of these arguments does not lie in the specific psychoanalytic mechanisms they elucidate or, for that matter, in their analytic accuracy. Rather, these mechanisms are significant for restoring visibility to the female figure within cultural discourse—that is, not as an autonomous subject, but as an *effect* of specific practices of representation and power.

This interrogation and elaboration of the way in which psychic and other immaterial forces shape the conditions of material experience draws together a number of the motifs running through the book. Hence the recurrence of the inside/outside duality, encapsulated in the paradigm of Pandora's Box, which recreates what Mulvey sets up as the relationship between the realm of fantasy, anxiety and desire, and the external phenomena that either mask or grant access to them. Hence, also, the crucial role that Mulvey gives to curiosity, a concept that emerges most fully in the last section of the book, in the essays "Myth, Narrative and Historical Experience" and "The Oedipus Myth." Here curiosity, the incisive gaze and penetrating quest for knowledge, offers a partial corrective to the voyeuristic and fetishistic drives, which resolutely refuse knowledge of the Other.

In these essays from the early and middle eighties, Mulvey turns to curiosity and narratives in order to reasses the binary modes of thought that dominate her earlier work; in particular the myth of Oedipus marks an effort to remap these spatial models onto a temporal one and thus escape the possibility of historical closure. Yet it is in Mulvey's attempt to retrieve the energies of an earlier moment that the limitations of her theoretical structures become clear. If, as she admits, the earlier strategies of feminism belong to the realm of "Utopian dreams," and "since then, the relation between feminism and psychoanalysis has become more complex and less instrumental," her use of a model that reproduces many of the same polarities of subjectivity and objectivity, of interiority and exteriority, is puzzling. The opening essay, a brief account of a demonstration at the 1970 Miss World contest, makes clear what was then at stake in the theoretical positions of feminism—the disruption of the pleasure of the gaze that sustains women *as spectacle.* In the later essays, Mulvey argues effectively and eloquently for the need to develop new strategies of resistance based on current conditions and practices; nevertheless, her own enterprise seems suspended between the demands of the present and the polemical positions of the past.

NINA ROSENBLATT

Subversive Pleasures

Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism and Film

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Robert Stam is emerging as a major voice in Bakhtin studies, particularly in regard to Bakhtin's relationship to contemporary popular culture, and this book is representative of Stam's research on Bakhtin over the last decade. The work of Soviet language theorist and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin was suppressed in his own country and

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virtually unknown to US scholars until the late 1970s. Bakhtin's notions of "dialogism," "heteroglossia," and the "carnivalesque" have become important to post-structuralist approaches to literature and mass media. Stam's book goes far in its claims about Bakhtin, who is described as a kind of progenitor of numerous strands of modernism and postmodernism, anticipating the work of Barthes, Derrida, Foucault, and the entire deconstructivist moment. Bakhtin does indeed seem prescient today, given that he began his major theoretical work in the teens and twenties.

Stam's book, which to a degree reworks and amplifies articles he has presented or published during the 1980s, is divided into six chapters and an "envoi." It appears, however, that the book is composed of three principal segments. In the first, Stam explicates lucidly and eloquently the key ideas of this often difficult theorist. In the second segment, Stam shows evidence of the Bakhtinian ethos in a variety of films—for Stam, cinema best exemplifies Bakhtin's (often idealized) notions of cultural discourse. The final part of the book suggests ways for a Bakhtinian critique to be applied to mass media, and for the media themselves to exploit Bakhtin's ideas.

Bakhtin, according to Stam, was the first radical theorist of this century to emphasize art's subversive function. In his concepts of dialogism and heteroglossia, Bakhtin prefigured post-structuralism (without much of the nihilism of that critical tendency) in suggesting that the artwork is one discourse among many, and that it enters into a discourse that demands the interaction of the reader /spectator. In this, Bakhtin anticipates Barthes's notion of the "death of the author," and the current radical critique of the Western "canon" of sacrosanct texts of received wisdom, although Bakhtin does not follow deconstruction's total debunking of subjectivity. Bakhtin states that the artwork is not univocal, but expressive of a variety of ideologies and cultural impulses that counter traditional Western conceptions of individual genius being the key force behind artistic production. For Bakhtin, writers such as Rabelais, Cervantes, and Dostoevsky best depict literature's capacity to reflect a site of many contesting voices, a polyphonic tradition as opposed to the univocal one advocated by a dominant ideology. Bakhtin's notion of carnival, which he locates as a specific image in art, becomes another general principle underlining the ludic aspect of art, an idea largely jettisoned or ignored by official culture and high art.

In Stam's discussion of the avant-garde, Third World cinema, and American comedy (Woody Allen, the Marx Brothers, Mel Brooks), Bakhtin's carnival comes into clear focus. According to Stam, these forms are constantly involved in parody, in preferring sexuality and the "lower body stratum" to the Enlightenment valorization of the spirit and the "world of the mind," and in advocating the playful, revivifying aspect of art that emphasizes human interaction, diversity, and radical notions (compared to Western criteria) of the social contained in the primordial concept of carnival.

A difficulty with Stam's appraisal of Bakhtin is the tendency to claim perhaps too much for the theorist, particularly in regard to the radical potentiality Bakhtinian analysis might still hold for contemporary civilization. When Stam suggests that the Democrats should have exploded Reagan's "morning in America" media strategy with a video montage exposing Reagan the actor (instead of taking what Stam calls the "Griersonian high moral ground" with the Democrats' staid, documentary-like clips), the point seems well taken, yet Stam pays insufficient attention to his own remarks on the media's power to co-opt all adversarial discourse. This faith in Bakhtin seems characteristic of the use of this theorist by the remains of the academic left. The attempt to discern sites of struggle in the "ludic" activity of postmodern media and mass culture products looks like a rather desperate attempt to locate adversarial tendencies in the terrible reaction of the 1980s. Certainly these tendencies occur, but some historical factors need to be taken into account.

While Stam is conscious of the historical forces that produced Bakhtin, this awareness is not sufficiently applied in discussing Bakhtin's relevance to the current situation. Bakhtin was responding to particular forms of univocal culture: industrial capitalism, Stalinism, European fascism. Although he posited a general theory of language and consciousness, Bakhtin dealt with literature, not the emerging electronic media forms of his day (there is little evidence that he had interest in them), nor is there any sense in his work that he anticipated the

effectuation of power in anything like the current media society. Stam acknowledges this, but his work constantly pushes Bakhtin with little heed to theorists such as Marcuse, Barthes, and Foucault, all of whom focused, using different methods, on power's tendency in postmodern civilization actually to support the ludic (or some simulation of it) and make more and more concessions in its strategy of repressive tolerance (Marcuse's famous phrase). At the current stage, there may be little connection between, for example, the liberation of the libido and political/economic resistance. Bakhtin was responding to an old-fashioned repression, to a puritanism and univocal culture supported by prisons, insane asylums, death camps. Certainly this puritanism and these punishments are still around, as are the chief theoretical issues Bakhtin addressed, but the dominant ideology sustains itself with cable television, the VCR, and the illusion of "choice" offered by consumerism. Perhaps the ludic would be useful today if it could somehow be combined with a call for critical consciousness and organized political effort.

While Stam's study of Bakhtin differs in any number of ways from Robin Wood's *Hollywood From Vietnam to Reagan,* it seems to share the progressive sensibility that wants to find the "cracks in the plaster" of the Reagan/Bush/Thatcher/Kohl era. The question remains, however, how a perception of these cracks, such as the contradictions of TV news or the "Oprah Winfrey Show," will provoke political change. The dialectic, as Pasolini remarked, may consist for the present only of contradiction, of constant tension, with little potential for resolution and forward movement. It is obvious that Stam's very fine book is offered as a radical gesture, but it is difficult to see how Bakhtin's heteroglossia and emphasis on the "interpersonal generation of meaning" would function in a totally atomized society, particularly one that already so valorizes a free-floating subjectivity. More important, a radical critique of society through an analysis of its popular (that is, mass-produced) culture seems of little relevance to anyone but the converted (the liberal or left-leaning upper-middle class), especially as our public educational system, which should empower people to accomplish such a critique and act upon it, rapidly deteriorates. Stam's criticism is laudable in dispensing with the stodginess of the Frankfurt School and in proving that mass culture is a valuable arena of ideas and conflict, but the centrality of popular culture is fairly manifest and there is simply little evidence that the mass audience is inclined to engage itself seriously (politically or otherwise) with this culture. Let's hope that Stam's version of Bakhtin, along with other progressive post-structuralist criticism, will be used as a pedagogical instrument in accomplishing some measure of social change and in moving postmodernity out of its reactionary torpor.

CHRISTOPHER SHARRETT

Hard Core

Power, Pleasure, and the "Frenzy of the Visible"

By Linda Williams. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989. $18.95

This unprecedented study moves beyond the impasse of anti-porn/anti-censorship position-taking to analyze what hard-core film pornography is and does—as a genre with a history, as a specific cinematic form, and as part of contemporary discourse on sexuality. Williams traces the roots of the form back to the origins of cinema itself, then follows its development through the stag films and feature-length narratives to contemporary "couple's market" and sadomasochistic permutations, showing how porn has begun to react to changing gender relations.

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opments in film study by a variety of eminent names: Andrew, Bordwell, Brunette, Carroll, Kaminsky, Kaplan, Naremore, Nichols, Palmieri, Simon, Solomon, Staiger, Stam, and editor Palmer himself. E. C.

Miscellaneous

Adamson, Joe. *Fifty Years and Only One Grey Hare.* New York: Holt, 1990. $35. A full-color feast for bunny-fans, with gossipy accounts of how the hare was created. Filmography. E. C.

Andersen, Christopher. *Young Kate* [Hepburn]. New York: Delta, 1990. $10.95 paper. Reissue of the 1988 work.

Block, Alex Ben. *Outfoxed: Marvin Davis, Barry Diller, Rupert Murdoch, Joan Rivers, and the Inside Story of America's Fourth Television Network.* New York: St. Martin's, 1990. $19.95. The editor of *Show Biz News* ardently recounts the big bad doings, down to the astounding fact that Diller broke his ankle in a motorcycle accident during an executive retreat, "but was soon back at his desk." In the great wheel of Hollywood karma it is important that such things be taken seriously, so it's nice to know that Block is on the job, and actually gets paid for it. E. C.

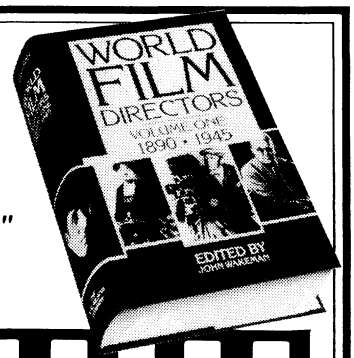
Brakhage, Stan. *Film at Wit's End: Eight Avant-Garde Filmmakers.* McPherson & Co., P.O. Box 1126, Kingston, NY 12401, 1989. $20.00. Brakhage has a great talent as a lecturer and anecdotist, and the chapters in this volume are derived from a series of lectures he gave at the Art Institute school in Chicago during the 1970s. The subjects are all independent film-makers he knew well—Broughton, Conner, Deren, Hill, Jacobs, MacLaine, Menken, and Peterson—and the stories he tells (often bizarre, as of Deren's *voodoun* "fits," in one of which she hurled a full-size refrigerator across a room) are entrancing. He also gives loving and intent attention to many of the films they made (one of which, Broughton's *Nuptiae,* he photographed) and the book also thus becomes a special kind of critical recapitulation of a generation's work. A basic book in the canon of experimental cinema. E. C.

Brook, Peter. *The Shifting Point.* New York: Harper and Row, 1989. $9.95 paper. Reissue of the 1987 work.

Brakhage, Stan. *I . . . Sleeping: (Being a Dream Journal and Parenthetical Explication)* Island Cinema Resources, 135 St. Pauls Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10301, 1988. $5.95.

Brown, David. *Let Me Entertain You.* New York: Morrow, 1990. $19.95. The famous producer tells stories about his life with various people, including the editor of *Cosmo.* They are only mildly entertaining. E. C.

Corey, Melinda, and George Ochoa. *The Man in Lincoln's Nose: Funny, Profound, and Quotable Quotes of Screenwriters, Movie Stars, and Moguls.* New York: Fireside, 1990. $8.95 paper. A lot of the Hollywood wit collected here really *is* witty (a lot of it in the rapier department). E. C.



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opments in film study by a variety of eminent names: Andrew, Bordwell, Brunette, Carroll, Kaminsky, Kaplan, Naremore, Nichols, Palmieri, Simon, Solomon, Staiger, Stam, and editor Palmer himself. E. C.

Miscellaneous

Adamson, Joe. *Fifty Years and Only One Grey Hare.* New York: Holt, 1990. $35. A full-color feast for bunny-fans, with gossipy accounts of how the hare was created. Filmography. E. C.

Andersen, Christopher. *Young Kate* [Hepburn]. New York: Delta, 1990. $10.95 paper. Reissue of the 1988 work.

Block, Alex Ben. *Outfoxed: Marvin Davis, Barry Diller, Rupert Murdoch, Joan Rivers, and the Inside Story of America's Fourth Television Network.* New York: St. Martin's, 1990. $19.95. The editor of *Show Biz News* ardently recounts the big bad doings, down to the astounding fact that Diller broke his ankle in a motorcycle accident during an executive retreat, "but was soon back at his desk." In the great wheel of Hollywood karma it is important that such things be taken seriously, so it's nice to know that Block is on the job, and actually gets paid for it. E. C.

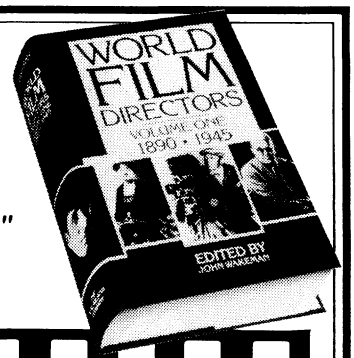
Brakhage, Stan. *Film at Wit's End: Eight Avant-Garde Filmmakers.* McPherson & Co., P.O. Box 1126, Kingston, NY 12401, 1989. $20.00. Brakhage has a great talent as a lecturer and anecdotist, and the chapters in this volume are derived from a series of lectures he gave at the Art Institute school in Chicago during the 1970s. The subjects are all independent film-makers he knew well—Broughton, Conner, Deren, Hill, Jacobs, MacLaine, Menken, and Peterson—and the stories he tells (often bizarre, as of Deren's *voodoun* "fits," in one of which she hurled a full-size refrigerator across a room) are entrancing. He also gives loving and intent attention to many of the films they made (one of which, Broughton's *Nuptiae,* he photographed) and the book also thus becomes a special kind of critical recapitulation of a generation's work. A basic book in the canon of experimental cinema. E. C.

Brook, Peter. *The Shifting Point.* New York: Harper and Row, 1989. $9.95 paper. Reissue of the 1987 work.

Brakhage, Stan. *I . . . Sleeping: (Being a Dream Journal and Parenthetical Explication)* Island Cinema Resources, 135 St. Pauls Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10301, 1988. $5.95.

Brown, David. *Let Me Entertain You.* New York: Morrow, 1990. $19.95. The famous producer tells stories about his life with various people, including the editor of *Cosmo.* They are only mildly entertaining. E. C.

Corey, Melinda, and George Ochoa. *The Man in Lincoln's Nose: Funny, Profound, and Quotable Quotes of Screenwriters, Movie Stars, and Moguls.* New York: Fireside, 1990. $8.95 paper. A lot of the Hollywood wit collected here really *is* witty (a lot of it in the rapier department). E. C.



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Gabbard, Krin, and Glen O. Gabbard. *Psychiatry and the Cinema.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989. $14.95 paper. Reissue of the 1987 work.

Heymann, Danielle, tr. by Sarah B. Pettit. *The Bear: The Storybook of the Film by Jean-Jacques Annaud.* New York: St. Martin's, 1990. $9.95 cloth. Somewhat bowdlerized children's version in prose; utterly beguiling photographs. E. C.

Horak, Jan-Christopher. *Dream Merchants: Making and Selling Films in Hollywood's Golden Age.* [Catalog of George Eastman House 1989–90 traveling exhibition]. International Museum of Photography, 900 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14607. Photo-documentation of the industry and its promotion machine.

Hurst, Fanny. *Imitation of Life.* New York: Harper & Row, 1990. $8.95. The 1933 novel, from which a whole genre flowed.

Johnson, Kim "Howard." *The First Twenty Years of Monty Python.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989. $14.95 paper. Reconstructions of the Python TV shows and films, prefaced by a brief survey of the beginnings of the group. Many photos by Johnson, who has tracked the Pythons faithfully over the years, with suitably nutty captions. A work of true fan dedication. E. C.

Kippa, Charles. *Out of Focus: Power, Pride and Prejudice—David Puttnam in Hollywood.* New York: Morrow, 1989. $22.95. At this point, the meteoric arrival and burn-up of Puttnam in Hollywood hardly seems to deserve another book, but this one is by the *Variety* writer who first told Columbia's side of the tale (over his editor's objections) and despite his breathless tone his account conveys well the substance-less flavor of high-level corporate wheeling and dealing. E. C.

Levy, Emanuel. *John Wayne: Prophet of the American Way of Life.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1988. $39.50. Smirk if you dare, pilgrim, but this is one heck of a serious cultural tome on the Duke—as movie star and folk icon. The cinematic analysis is rudimentary, but the book weaves its way round to a pair of worthwhile chapters on John Wayne's late career as "the political figure" and "the propagandist." Sociologist Emanuel Levy doesn't acknowledge the complex darkness of Wayne's best Western roles, but the paradoxes of his persona shine through the political gleanings. A favorite, from the SDS's Terry Robbins: "He's completely straight and really groovy." SCOTT SIMMON

Levy, Mark R., ed. *The VCR Age: Home Video and Mass Communication.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1989. $16.95 paper. A collection of papers, wherein one may learn telling facts such as that adults zip by two-thirds of commercials in viewing taped broadcasts, while students only use the fast-forward to eliminate a fifth, which (I surmise) may indicate either that brain damage is more advanced in the young or that their zapper fingers are weaker or else that they actually *like* commercials, having nothing better to think about. At any rate, this volume provides plenty of information on which to speculate. E. C.

Lipmann, Anthony. *Divinely Elegant: The World of Ernst Dryden.* New York: Viking Penguin, 1989. $40.00. A celebration (with witty foreword by his friend Billy Wilder) of the Austrian poster artist and designer who brought Weimar fashion to Hollywood costume design. Sumptuously produced British publication, with color throughout. E. C.

Mandelbaum, Howard, and Eric Myers. *Forties Screen Style: A Celebration of High Pastiche in Hollywood.* New York: St. Martin's, 1989. $24.95. Shiny, undented DC-3s! Train stations without street people! Bathtubs, bedrooms, heavenly gowns! Like poring over some fellow fan's scrapbook of production stills. E. C.

Mordden, Ethan. *The Hollywood Studios: Their Unique Styles During the Golden Age of Movies.* New York: Fireside, 1989. $12.95 paper. Reissue of the 1988 work.

Pfeiffer, Lee. *The John Wayne Scrapbook.* New York: Citadel, 1989. $15.95 paper. Truth in advertising! The author states in his introduction, "Hopefully, you will find a great deal of enjoyment in not expanding your horizons while pursuing [sic] the book." Lots of pictures, not very well reproduced. E. C.

Prouty, Olive Higgins. *Stella Dallas.* New York: Harper and Row, 1990. $8.95 paper. The novel upon which the film was based (Stanwyck graces the cover).

Renoir, Jean. *Renoir on Renoir: Interviews, Essays, and Remarks.* tr. by Carol Volk. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990. $47.50 cloth, $14.95 paper. Auteurism may be dead (long live auteurism?) but auteurs never die, and Renoir of course is the ultimate *roi des auteurs.* This volume displays his character (in his day there was no lingering doubt as to whether such entities existed) in fine form. Even on the printed page, what stands out above all about Renoir is the quality of his *attention,* a kind of innate respect for people which enabled him to see the unusual in them where most of us see only the conventional, the signs. . . . The whole sweep of Renoir's career is covered here in one way or another—the greatest part via *Cahiers* interviews, but some texts prepared for television are also included. With a gracious afterword by Jean-Louis Comolli. E. C.

Schulberg, Budd. *What Makes Sammy Run?* New York: Random House, 1990. $19.95. 50th anniversary ed. of this Hollywood classic novel—with an afterword by Schulberg lamenting the fact that his savage portrait of selfish greed is now taken as a guidebook by ambitious yuppies. E. C.

Sennett, Ted. *The Art of Hanna-Barbera.* New York: Viking Penguin, Inc., 1989. $50.00 reg. ed.; $300.00 for signed limited ed.

Sennett, Ted. *Hollywood's Golden Year, 1939: A fiftieth Anniversary Celebration.* New York: St. Martin's, 1989. $29.95. Studio stills galore, nostalgic text that recreates the films and gives some historical background. E. C.

Tarkovsky, Andrey. *Sculpting in Time.* Tr. by Kitty Hunter-Blair. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989. A paperback reissue of Tarkovsky's highly original observations (often distancing himself from Eisenstein's *montage* aesthetic) with many oblique and some direct references to the making of his films. E. C.

Taylor, Helen. *Scarlett's Women: Gone with the Wind and Its Female Fans.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989. $35.00. A British feminist goes far beyond the usual fan mush about *GWTW* and produces an analysis drawing not only from the importance of the film in her own life but also from questionnaires and correspondence with other women. Along the way she also produces an astute interpretation of what *really* went on in the scene that Selznick described as "Row and Rape," and of the complex—and in some ways "maternal"—fantasy components of women's perceptions of Rhett Butler. (Taylor's correspondents don't give a damn about poor Ashley.) The whole Victorian mixture of sex, race, class, violence, war, etc. receives intriguing and unusually frank handling in this lively book. E. C.

Thomas, Tony. *The West that Never Was: Hollywood's Vision of the Cowboys and Gunfighters.* New York: Citadel Press, 1989. Based on the PBS series. Production lore and evocations of the films.

Thomas, Tony, and Aubrey Solomon. *The Films of Twentieth Century-Fox.* Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1985. $19.95 paper. Reissue of the 1985 work.

Vermilye, Jerry. *More Films of the '30s.* New York: Citadel, 1989. $16.95. Another scrapbook full of nicely printed studio stills, with credits and story summaries. E. C.

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